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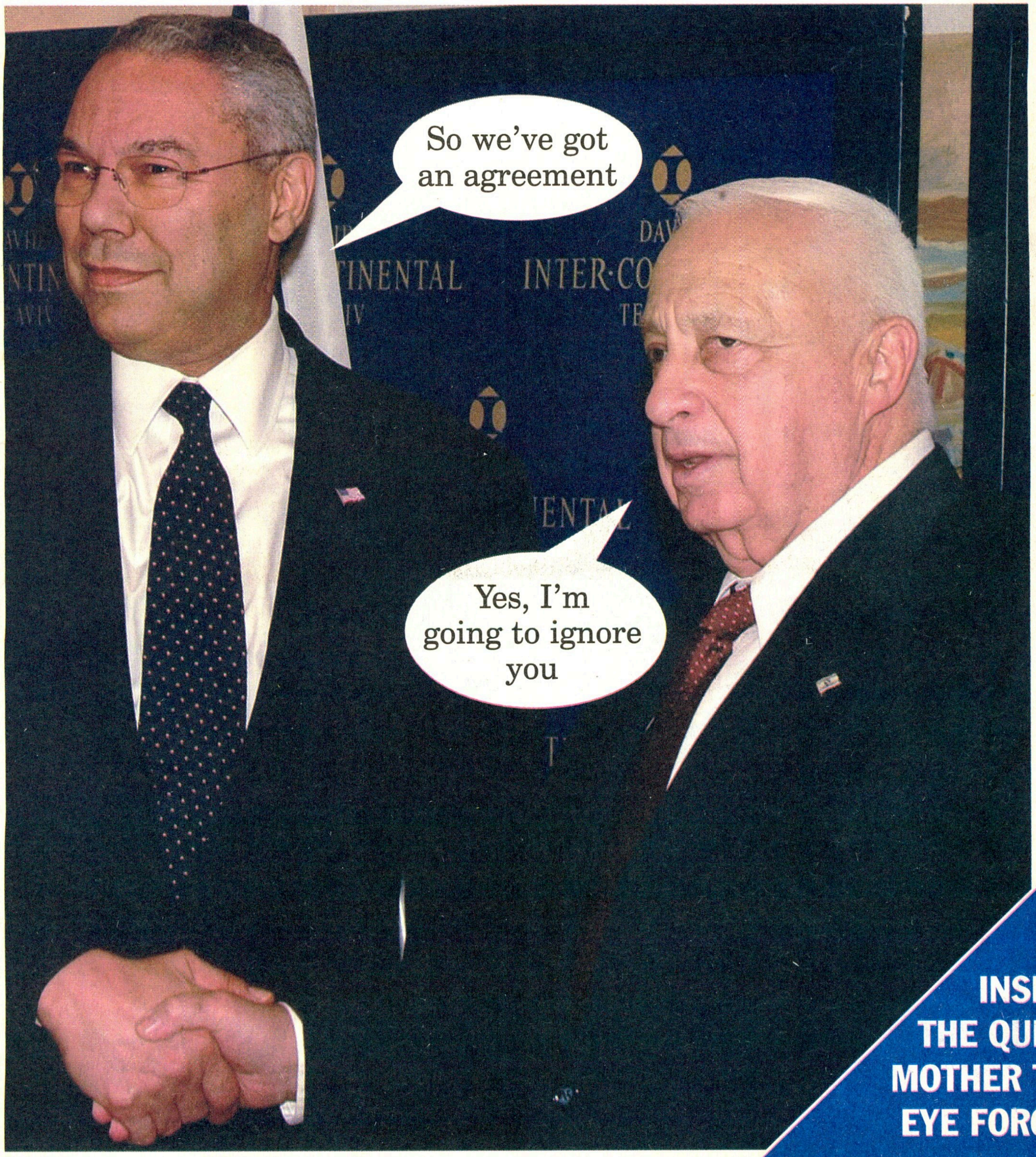

INSIDE: THE QUEEN MOTHER THE EYE FORGOT

– SPECIAL 94 PAGE SUPPLEMENT

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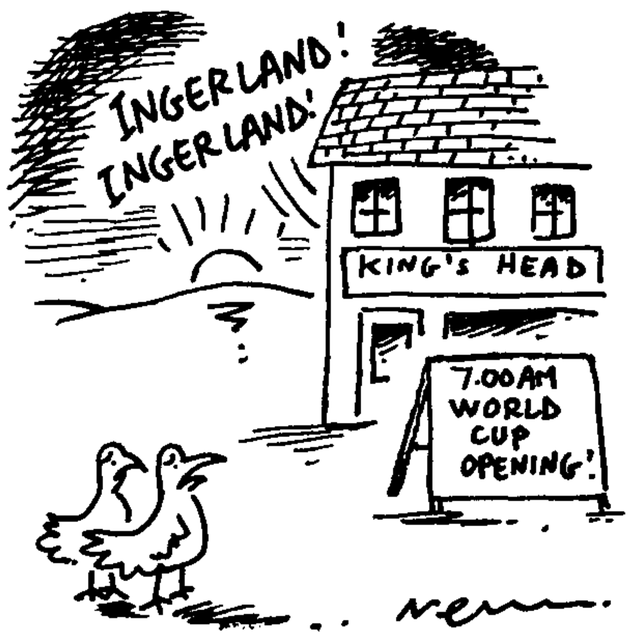
Gnome

LET ME set the record straight once and for all regarding my links with the well-respected Australian supermarket chain Ozgrab.

It is true that this company pays me a large retainer to advise them on retail matters in connection with their expansion into the UK market. As a well-known pop music producer and the man who discovered *inter alia* the singing sensation Mr Tony Blair *(surely 'Alvin Stardust'? Ed)*, I was the obvious choice to advise the "baked-beans-to-toothpaste" conglomerate on how to approach the intricacies of the British planning laws.

The suggestion that "they bunged me a wad just because I'm mates with Tony", as stated by Ozgrab's spokesman, is as preposterous as it is true. Unfortunately I am too busy to comment further on these allegations at present because I am solving the crisis in the Middle East.

E. Strobes
pp Lord Gnomy
Hotel Intifada, Tel Aviv.



"Oh no – it's the Dawn Chorus"

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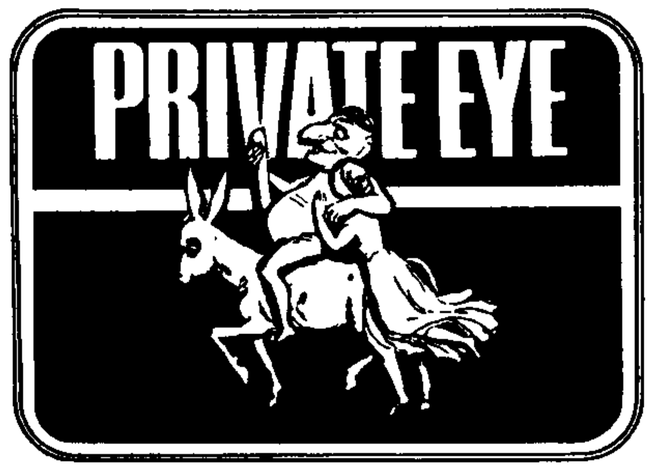

A taxing read

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BUSINESS AS USUAL

"After nearly two weeks of the Israeli offensive into the West Bank, Ariel Sharon can take heart from the sudden halt to suicide bombings."

— *Daily Telegraph* editorial, 10 April.

"Ariel Sharon rejected an unprecedented call by the world's major powers to halt violence in the Middle East yesterday, insisting that his army would continue waging a 'war of survival'. The Israeli prime minister spoke hours after eight people were killed in a suicide bombing near Haifa."

— *Daily Telegraph*, 11 April.

"The Middle East peace mission of Colin Powell, the US secretary of state, was on the brink of collapse last night amid mounting hostility caused by a suicide bomber in Jerusalem… The suicide attack, by a woman, killed six Israelis and injured about 60 just before the start of the Jewish Sabbath."

— *Daily Telegraph*, 13 April.

WHEN George W. Bush made his infamous speech about the axis of evil (Iran, Iraq and North Korea) that supports terrorism and is "arming to threaten the peace of the world", it must have slipped his mind that his defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld was on the board of Swedish-Swiss engineering company ABB.

Rumsfeld resigned as a director in February, but not until after ABB signed a contract to provide equipment and services for two nuclear power stations to be built in North Korea.

FOR a six-figure fee, Mo Mowlam has graciously allowed the *Mail on Sunday* exclusive serial rights to her memoirs, in which she rages against the politicians and hacks who conspired to do her down.

However, one newspaper may be absent from her list of enemies – even though in August 1999 it urged Tony Blair to sack Mo as Northern Ireland secretary for her "appeasement" of Republican terrorism. "Mo Mowlam's usefulness is obviously at an end," it thundered. "Keeping her in place serves no useful purpose, but will increasingly demoralise or infuriate many of those in the province." The prime minister should "put the future of the peace process into a new, steadier pair of hands".

The paper which thought it "obvious" that she had outlived her usefulness was, of course, the selfsame *Mail on Sunday* which suddenly finds her very useful indeed.

LAST October, with a great fanfare, Railtrack's former operations director Jonson Cox issued a libel writ against Christian Wolmar, author of the book *Broken Rails: How Privatisation Wrecked Britain's Railways*. Cox, who had been sacked in August, was claiming more than £50,000 damages from Wolmar and his publishers, Aurum Press.

Now, with rather less fanfare (indeed none at all), the case has been settled. Cox will receive no damages, no costs and no apology. Still, at least he has something to show for his efforts. Under the terms of the settlement, Wolmar must buy a meal for both Cox and his wife, so long as the bill is no more than £100.

After his sacking last summer Cox was given a pay-off of £300,000, which is being paid in monthly instalments of £25,000. Can he really be finding it so hard to make ends meet that he now needs food hand-outs?

THE *Daily Mail* has rightly excoriated the spineless BBC and *Guardian* for questioning whether the House of Windsor has a future.

"Everything about yesterday's remarkable occasion was a refutation of their jeering claims that the passing of the Queen Mother signals the monarchy's last hurrah," it declares. "Provided its members are inspired by the example of self-discipline and devotion to duty set by the Queen Mother and the Queen, the Royal Family can ensure the Monarchy's survival for many years to come."

Alas! It seems one of the *Mail*'s top columnists disagrees. On the evening of the funeral, Nigel Dempster appeared live on CNN to inform American viewers that "with the queen mother gone, we are going to get a lot of flak on the queen and Prince Charles and who follows him. I think this is the end of the monarchy… I feel that the queen will be the last monarch sitting on the throne of England. I don't think there will be a King Charles."

In *Mail* terms this counts as treason. No doubt editor Paul Dacre will sack Dumpster at once for his appallingly unpatriotic comments.

TOP investigative hacks at women's weekly *Chat* magazine must have spent the last fortnight kicking themselves.

A "Jubilee Health Special" in the 10 April edition rated the health of all the immediate members of the royal family on a scale of one to ten. Wills and Harry scored only 7/10 apiece, while poor old Prince Andrew's health was rated 2/10, but the highest score of all – 10/10 – went to… the Queen Mother!

OLD JOKES REVISITED*

**This joke first appeared in Private Eye in 200 BC and has been republished 1,738 times during various crises in the Middle East, making it the magazine's oldest surviving joke.*

Street of Shame

WHEN news of the Queen Mother's death broke, the tiny group of royal hacks and handful of snappers who had followed the three princes to Klosters for what had promised to be just another boring skiing holiday were summoned to a press briefing by Prince Charles's press secretary.

They were surprised to find their numbers swelled by a coterie of young blonde girls dressed to the nines, at least one of whom hailed from a Sunday red-top. The bona-fide reporters soon concluded that the girls were honey traps who had been preparing to spend the evening in the resort's nightclubs ready to pounce on Wills and Harry.

With their papers on deadline and the Queen Mother story breaking fast it appears the lovelies were instructed to break cover and hotfoot it to the briefing, causing much eyebrow-raising among royal aides.

LUVVIES

"Self-preservation has taught me to moderate what I say. I communicate my passion in a way that takes me on the express train to Pseuds Corner in Private Eye. Acting indulges me. It's my mistress. It's with me in the morning, and puts me to bed at night."

DAMIAN LEWIS
Radio Times

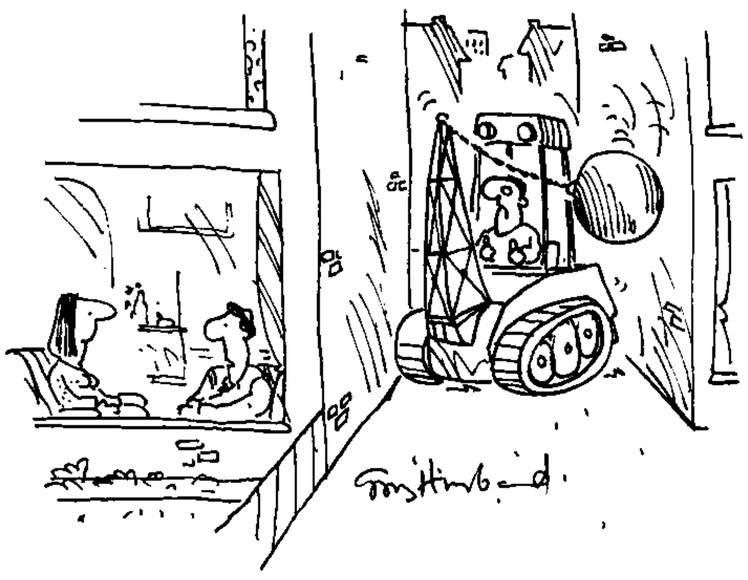
An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

"DASH for cash as Piers considers his options," declared a story in the media pages of the *Sunday Express* on 31 March claiming that *Mirror* editor Piers Morgan has cashed in up to £1m of his Trinity Mirror share options.

Sunday Express media hack Frank Bailey suggested that Morgan has sold off all but £11,000 of his share options and used the proceeds to buy a Sussex mansion. But what makes the story particularly bizarre is a quote from former *Mirror* city slicker Anil Bhoyrul, who lost his job along with James Hipwell over the Viglen share-dealing scandal which Moron survived.

Arslikhan Anal Boil was quoted as saying: "I've no idea what shares Piers did or didn't have in Trinity Mirror, but if he's made a million he deserves it. He's an outstanding editor, and I wish him well." Curious indeed, considering that Frank Bailey is the nom-de-plume of a certain, er, Anil Bhoyrul.

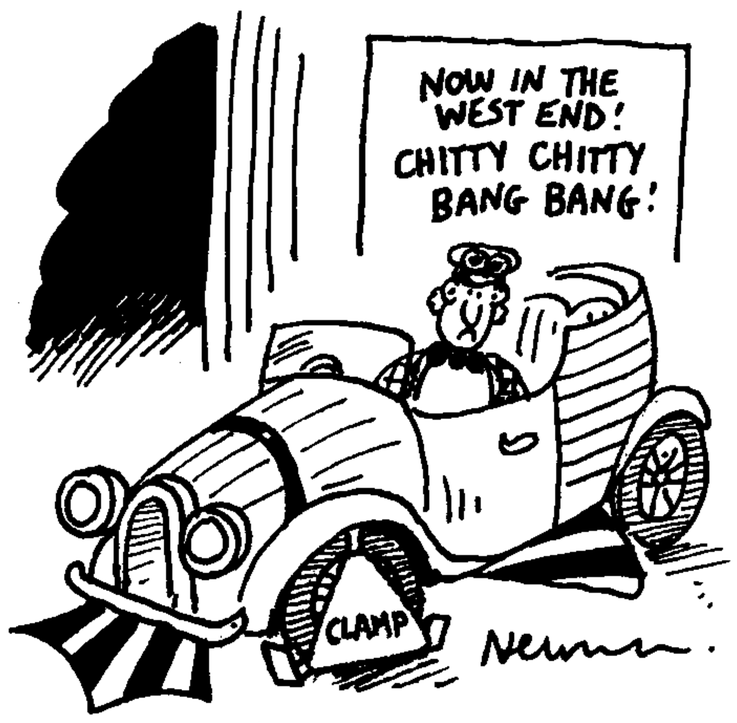
Even by the dubious standards of Dirty Des's business pages a reporter using a pseudonym and then quoting himself as not knowing whether or not the story he has written is accurate must be some sort of record!



"Well, I think our neighbour finally got the message"

INTERESTING to see the *Guardian* devoting two pages of its Media supplement on 8 April to the subject of journalists protecting confidential sources - a cause for which some hacks have long been prepared to go to jail.

The article concluded by lauding those journalists "who are prepared to risk imprisonment rather than break their word". But there was no room to mention one of the most notorious "protection of sources" cases in recent times in which somebody did actually go to jail. Funnily enough it concerned the *Guardian*, which in 1983 received a leaked memo showing that the Tory government had misled parliament over the deployment of cruise missiles. After going through the legal motions, the memo was meekly handed over to the authorities. The person subsequently jailed was not then *Guardian* editor Peter Preston, but courageous civil servant Sarah Tisdall.



THE *Guardian*, one of the few nationals to cover the plight of the low paid in Britain, reported last year that the average starting salary for graduates in the traditionally badly paid retail and catering sectors was £17,000 – what a graduate trainee gets at McDonald's, for example.

The *Guardian* group itself, however, is even less generous than the burger empire. Graduate trainee hacks at Guardian Media-owned Greater Manchester Weekly Newspapers (North), with titles like the *Rochdale Observer*, *Accrington Observer* and *Oldham Advertiser*, start on a miserable £10,486 a year. The maximum any senior, experienced hack in the group below the rank of deputy editor can earn is £17,692 – just a few quid more than a burger flipper with a degree.

It's not as if the *Grauniad* can't afford to pay a bit more. In the year to 1 April 2001 GMN, the division involved, made an after-tax profit of £12.4m.

The National Union of Journalists chapel asked for a 7.5 percent rise to help catch up with other industries, such as burger bars. But the management has refused to offer more than 2.5 percent – although it has offered the even more impoverished hacks of the group's South Manchester titles parity with their colleagues north of the city.

In a secret ballot, 100 percent of NUJ members who took part voted for a series of one-day strikes. So the management of the company, in a move straight from the Murdoch-Montgomery manual of industrial relations, derecognised the union.

The desperate hacks then appealed to the Great Liberal himself, Hugo Young, *Grauniad* columnist, chairman of the Scott Trust and supposed guardian of *Guardian* values. From a great height came the great man's verdict. The Scott Trust, he said, could not interfere in local management decisions. *Grauniad* readers who wish to debate the issue with him can do so by sending their views to hugoyoung@compuserve.com.

OUR revelation in the last *Eye* that Dirty Desmond is relaunching one of his porn mags under the alluring title *Spunk Loving Sluts* caused consternation at the wholesalers W.H. Smith, John Menzies and Surridge Dawson, who all promptly refused to stock it. Intense fury ensued at the Grey Lubyanka, since the mags had already been printed.

As with all failures within Northern & Shell, Dirty Des conveniently forgot that he was the architect of this particular farce and told Martin "Rotweiller" Ellice to find a suitable sacrifice. Since most of the usual scapegoats have already been slaughtered over recent weeks, the victim this time will have to be Ric Porter, the current head of smut. His crime? Agreeing with Dirty Des that *Spunk Loving Sluts* was an inspired choice of title and should be put into production without delay.

Incidentally, Porter's current girlfriend Vicki Holloway, a blonde nude model, has now been employed as the chief sub editor for the porn magazines. Any worries that a glamour model wasn't quite up to the task were soon laid to rest when it was remembered that the text in the magazines had actually been written more than a quarter of a century ago. Vicki's job involves simply deleting any giveaway references to "sexy new Tory leader Margaret Thatcher" or "pop heart-throbs the Bay City Rollers" – and, where necessary, changing the word "shillings" into "pence".

ANDREW "Brillo Pad" Neill has discovered that there are pitfalls to editing *Sunday Business*, now called *The Business*, from the south of France.

An employment tribunal last week decided that the newspaper had unfairly dismissed its chief investigative reporter Mark Watts after he wrote memos complaining about the scaling back of his investigations unit and the general direction of the paper. Watts told the tribunal: "On Saturday night (close the to the paper's deadline) the sub-editors would often find the pages locked, meaning someone was working in them. The cry would go up, 'Who's in the pages?' and the answer would be, 'It's Andrew Neill in the south of France.'"

Two days before the tribunal began Brillo was holding one of his regular editorial conferences. As usual, he was at his French villa, while his minions were at the paper's office in London massed around a "squawk box" which allows them to hear his instructions down the telephone line. (The advantage for hard-pressed staff at the troubled paper is that they can pull faces and give two-finger salutes as Neill blathers away, although they do so under the glare of a blown-up picture of Brillo taken for the cover of his book, *Full Disclosure*.)

Alas! Mid-way through the conference Brillo's dog, Napoleon, decided he'd had enough – and lunged savagely at his master. Instead of listening to the editor-in-chief's views on the great issues of the day, all *Business* hacks could hear was: "Aaargh! Down, boy! Bad Napoleon! Get your teeth out of my leg!"

IS the dowager media commentator Roy Greenslade leading a more interesting life than his writing suggests? Or was there a degree of embellishment in the *UK Press Gazette*'s diary item about him on 5 April?

The mag reported Greenslime's apparent confusion at being invited to address a Swedish conference on the subject of breast-feeding. But the punchline of the story – that the veteran hack had misunderstood the Swedish pronunciation of the words "press freedom" – was very familiar to many.

In his book *Will This Do?*, the late great Auberon Waugh recorded flying all the way to Senegal with his breast-feeding speech written out in French, only to discover his mistake after arriving at his destination in Dakar. Amazingly enough, Waugh's was a true story.

DEATHWATCH

●"IN many ways she was the woman of the century, because of her stern refusal to accept totalitarianism."

So said the prolific royal hagiographer Andrew Roberts, in one of his countless tributes to the Queen Mother. Can he by any chance be related to the angry young historian Andrew Roberts whose 1994 book *Eminent Churchillians* included a chapter on "The House of Windsor and the Politics of Appeasement"?

In *Eminent Churchillians*, Roberts severely criticised the attitude of the then Queen and her husband during the late 1930s, noting that they "failed to make the mental leap necessary to appreciate that feeding the Nazi beast whetted its appetite, and that only a firm stance early on could have averted war. They represented the most unprepossessing aspects of conventional wisdom, at precisely the time when it was proving dangerously mistaken".

Nor, he added, was she "noticeably concerned by the plight of the Nazis' victims, considering a country's internal political arrangements to be her own affair". Clearly this cannot be the same Roberts who, in articles and TV appearances over the past fortnight, has claimed that the Queen Mum personified "the spirit of defiance" against Nazism.

●"THE past used to be the foreign country where they did things differently. Now many of us find, to our horror, that the foreign country is the present, and that the England we knew is not the England we live in. The place is becoming increasingly dangerous and uncongenial... The country is going to the dogs." – Simon Heffer, *Spectator*, 30 March.

"AS I stood by the Queen Mother's coffin in Westminster Hall yesterday, among hundreds of my silent fellow Britons, and with tens of thousands more waiting outside, I realised something quite wonderful about our country: that it has not changed a bit. Such an assertion will horrify modernisers of all parties, colours and creeds who like to tell us that this is a 'new' Britain where things are done differently. It isn't, and they aren't." – Simon Heffer, *Daily Mail*, 9 April.

●EVEN at the republican *Guardian* staff were instructed to show some Ali G-style "respec'" to HM. As long ago as last August, all hacks working for the *Grauniad* website were sent a memo headed: "What to do if the Queen Mother dies on your nightshift."

"Rebuild the front page to a mourning one," it advised. "Use your news sense: put the news story at the top and the four biographies underneath (delete the birthday biography and retire it — it is written in the present tense). Keep everything else from the birthday + all the articles from 1900 and *The Guardian Century* (key events in her life). The `Dress the Queen Mum' game and the 'How much do you love the Queen Mum?' quiz should go. They are likely to provoke reader complaints."

●LYNDA Lee-Potter of the *Daily Mail* gave the Queen Mum a surprisingly Spartish send-off: "She was hugely privileged, adored luxury and was lucky enough to be able to indulge her tastes... I do not wish to hear one more unctuous phrase about the nation's so-called favourite grandmother."

Fortunately, balance was restored by her fellow-Glenda, Sue Carroll of the left-wing *Daily Mirror*. "I hope sincerely that mourners will come out in their thousands to line the streets," she wrote on 3 April. "It is no less than she deserves, this extraordinary woman who has contributed so much to the nation's life... Please let us never become so browbeaten by the cynics that we are ashamed to show our allegiance to the Crown and to display some heartfelt patriotism."

Railing against those who criticise the royals "because they hold a position of privilege", Carroll seemed truly outraged to discover that not everyone was prostrate with grief. "The air of ambivalence has been shocking, dispiriting and a sad reflection of how little we appreciate those who have done so much for our country."

Ambivalence, eh? Perhaps she was thinking of a carping article written by a *Mirror* hackette a mere two days earlier, which complained that the Queen Mother "lived the life of a grand Edwardian lady, taking lunch, afternoon tea and frittering her money on beautiful clothes and her beloved racehorses. It was a life in complete ignorance of the value of money or housekeeping. Her blissful unawareness of the way the majority of the population lived their lives must have caused the Queen privately to despair... They were, in short, hermetically sealed in a small world, and although the Queen makes an effort to peer outside of it, the Queen Mother rarely, if ever, did." The author of this disrespectful put-down was, er, Sue Carroll.

●AN appalling blunder at the *Times* forced the publication of this correction last Thursday: "A photograph in the Queen Mother's funeral supplement yesterday carried an agency caption that mistakenly identified the Duke of Aosta as Prince Ernst-August of Hanover, the husband of Princess Caroline of Monaco."

But will Prince Ernst-August be content to leave it at that? In 1998 he broke a cameraman's nose; in 1999 he kicked a female photographer; the following year he assaulted a hotel owner in Kenya, and then outraged the many Turks in Germany by urinating over the Turkish pavilion at Expo 2000 in Hanover after drinking too much champagne.

When a German hackette on *Bild* reported these events she was bombarded with obscene and threatening phone calls from Ernst-August. Eventually, last December, his various eruptions landed him with an eight month jail sentence (suspended for two years) and a £160,000 fine. Many hacks at the Queen Mother's funeral noted the prince's presence among the "foreign royal dignitaries" who brought extra class and regal grandeur to the ceremony. Perhaps it would have spoiled the story had they mentioned that he is in fact a convicted thug.

●ANOTHER hack enjoying a bumper payday is royal biographer Anthony Holden, who churned out several lengthy tributes to the nation's favourite granny.

In a 2,500-word obituary for Dirty Des's *Express*, he praised her charm, modesty and sense of duty. "She had come to symbolise the values of an era which still holds a strong emotional appeal to many Britons: an era of patriotism and 'the proper thing', of conservative values and churchgoing morals, of formal but close-knit family life, of canasta and charades and country walks, of genteel delight in good clean fun... an era in which the monarchy represented Christian family values, and was loved by its people without qualification."

This may have surprised any *Express* readers who happened to recall Holden's even lengthier article published by the *Observer* in July 2000 which savaged her as the most "spoilt and selfish" royal of modern times — "a woman who had never done a day's work in her life, who had blithely run up eight-figure overdrafts of the taxpayers' money on racehorses, had four palatial residences, 50 full-time servants and the pampered life of a latter-day Marie Antoinette."

In his *Observer* piece two years ago, Holden ridiculed the myth that the then Queen contributed anything to the war effort. Sneering at her famous comment after the bombing of Buckingham Palace ("now we can look the East End in the face"), Holden quoted "the wry remark recently made to me by one disaffected courtier: 'She wouldn't even know where the East End was.'"

Curiously, he forgot to mention any of this in his *Express* tribute, which applauded the King and Queen for staying in London — "an act of defiance to the Nazi bombers that came to symbolise their place at the head of an embattled nation, sharing every aspect of its ordeal. Elizabeth turned Buckingham Palace into an engine room of the war effort."
Gawd bless yer, Sir Anthony!

Most tasteful advertisment 2002

Brontë PORCELAIN

Queen Mother Candle Snuffer 4" £99
or deposit of £24 & 3 instalments of £25

Limited • 1250 • Edition of

Brontë Porcelain Company of Worcester are a relatively young company who have specialised in producing collectable Candle Snuffers (or Extinguishers as they prefer them to be known)

Legal News

AMONG the items on the desk of new *Times* editor Robert Thomson is a still-smouldering communication from former Conservative party treasurer Lord Ashcroft, who was thought to have settled his differences with the paper two years ago. It was provoked by a lively recent encounter between Ashcroft and Thomson's predecessor, Peter Stothard.

Readers will recall the libel action brought by Ashcroft in 1999, which promised to pitch *Times* hacks into the welcoming jaws of George Carman QC. The relief was palpable when Rupert Murdoch himself settled the action out of court.

Quite what prompted Stothard to resume hostilities, at a recent charity event in the Natural History Museum, is unclear. But it may not be unconnected to events in Atlanta, Georgia, where a US drug enforcement administration (DEA) analyst called Jonathan Randel is awaiting trial on a series of charges which include receiving money from News International.

If Stothard hoped to deter Ashcroft from helping the Americans with their inquiries, he failed. Following Stothard's outburst the Belizean billionaire is now increasingly determined to repair the damage done by the *Times*'s campaign and by "new" Labour's dirty tricks – including the initial, and widely-leaked, refusal of a peerage. He is already suing the government and now, according to his advisers, wants to "clear his name properly". Good news for the lawyers, of course, but less welcome in Wapping and Whitehall.

Ashcroft's letter to Thomson, which referred to cocaine addiction at the *Times* and alleged that some of the paper's staff had commissioned illegal acts, alarmed the new editor. He sought an explanation from the paper's legal manager, Alastair "Blubber" Brett, a central figure in the messy Ashcroft business. Brett's considered response was rather longer than the average novel. But the final chapters in this saga have, evidently, still to be written.

"One day, son, you'll be a star – I've pencilled you in for Wednesday, 5 July, 2006..."

Court Circular

THE Queen Mother's funeral ceremonies would not have been half so grand if Downing Street had got its way. Convinced after the emotional "people's" send-off for Diana that Britain would no longer tolerate the pomp of state lie-ins and full-blown ceremonial, government pressure was applied to the palace to scale down the funeral plans, known as Operation Tay Bridge, on more than one occasion.

But Buckingham Palace refused to yield. Mainly because the QM was Tay Bridge's author – she started planning it all 50 years ago – and the old high Tory wouldn't give in to a Labour government that had distanced itself from her centenary celebrations (even though it later regretted it [*Eye* 1009]), led by a man who had tried to hijack her centenary service (*Eye* 997).

Even in the immediate aftermath of the death, with the Queen remaining in private mourning at Windsor, pressure was applied to Sir Robin Janvrin, Brenda's private secretary, to persuade her to downsize the event. Janvrin pointed out that Operation Tay Bridge had come into force the minute the QM died, under the control of Lt Col Sir Malcolm Ross, comptroller of the lord chamberlain's office, and Brigadier Perry Mason, the army officer responsible for organising the military, and Janvrin wasn't about to get in their way.

Downing Street, fretting about a lack of public sympathy, hastily prepared a series of press releases designed to counteract negative public opinion – and then did a quick U-turn when it found none of them was needed and then announced the recall of parliament to pay its respects before the speaker had even been consulted or the palace informed.

THE funeral service was conducted by Dr Wesley Carr, the dean of Westminster famous for his numerous sackings and years of conflict and strife in this and previous posts (*Eyes passim*). He seemed to be a trifle confused about who the event was meant to be honouring.

A few days before the funeral he sent out a press pack. Among the helpful background notes he informed journalists that "Wesley Carr is one of the Church of England's foremost thinkers and organisers. His career has two distinct strands; he has achieved distinction as an academic theologian and as an internationally-recognised authority in managing human relations and social change."

THERE'S nothing like a grand royal occasion to reveal who's in and who's on the way out.

Prominently seated in their morning dress were the senior place staff – Janvrin, Peat, et al, including press secretary Penny Russell-Smith. However, her arch rival, the considerably better-paid communications secretary Simon Walker, seconded from BA, was seated with the lounge suit brigade way back in the one and sixpennies. Watch this space.

THERE have been quiet sighs of relief up and down the land in the last fortnight from some of the small businesses who had the honour of serving the old queen.

Orders for goods and services were routinely accompanied by a letter which began: "Should you wish to make these goods a gift to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother…" and went on to explain that traders who waived the right to payment could expect a letter on crested paper from some Lord High Swizzlestick or other, conveying the QM's grateful thanks. Grand for the mantelpiece, if not for the bank account.

THERE is now concern at the palace about what to do about Prince Philip's image.

Having been downgraded to the B list of royals by the BBC (meaning he doesn't even get a burgundy tie when he goes), the palace is concerned that the 80 year old, who has never exactly cultivated public affection, will not be much missed. Although plans for *his* funeral are low key, at his insistence, Brenda is known to be unhappy with them and expects the nation to be more grateful to him. The job of promoting the gaffe-prone duke at this late hour will be a challenge indeed.

'Flunkey'

O·B·N SPECIAL

"On a summer evening I stood alone with the Queen Mother on the ramparts of Walmer Castle. Above us flew the standard of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, an office which she wore as gaily as a feather in her hat. Below us, a semicircle of cannon guarded the Kentish coast. She raised her arm and pointed far out across the Channel. 'Look,' she said. 'France.' Within a few days of her 100th birthday, lame and half-blind, she spoke with the voice of King Henry V before Agincourt."

Kenneth Rose, Sunday Telegraph.

"If I had to choose one garden that encapsulated the character of the woman most it would be Birkhall. Held in by the Scottish landscape, it is a bell-shaped potager encircled by a wide herbaceous border, a late summer sunset of oranges, reds, purples and yellows, and bisected by a path flanked with a broad ribbon of pink phlox backed by sweet peas. It is both pretty and practical. Somehow, Birkhall combines in horticultural terms the Queen Mother's resolute toughness, which was always concealed within a gossamer overlay of fluttering pinks and blues."

Sir Roy Strong, Sunday Telegraph.

"With the passing of the Queen Mother we have lost our most treasured national person. She was not merely an historical figure. She WAS history… Her friendship was the greatest privilege of my life for which I gave and give thanks every day… May Her Majesty enter into glory in the court of the Lord of Lords and King of Kings."

Lord St John of Fawsley (who else?)

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

Ma'amballs

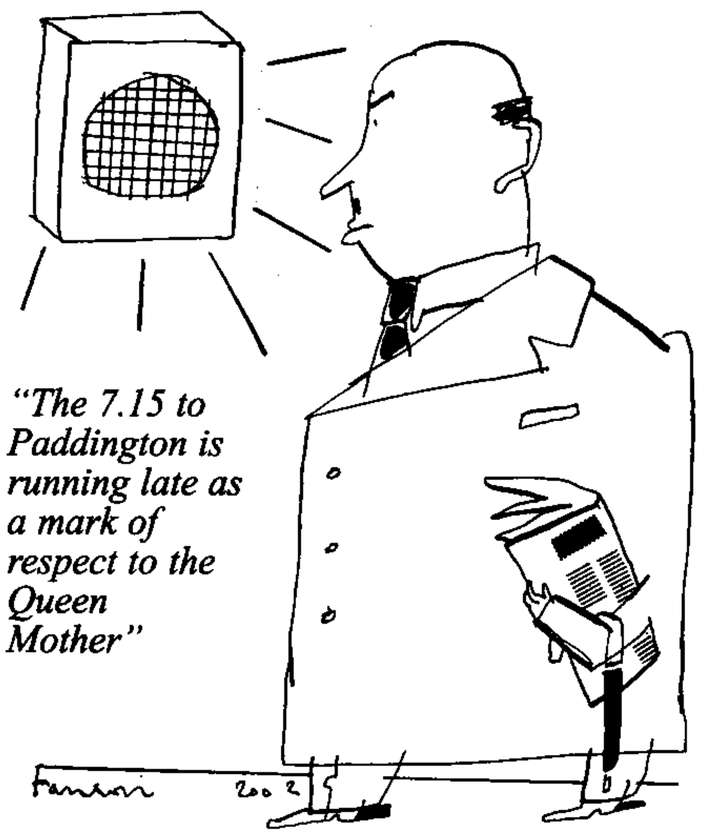
● "Such charm, such selfless devotion to duty, such dedication to her family and her people. Shall we never see that famous smile again, the one that drives out demons and makes dictators cower?

"Perhaps; when sunlight catches the dewy dawn on a British hedgerow. Or when hoofbeats echo down a sleepy Cotswolds lane. Or when the fragrance of sizzling bacon reaches the nostrils of an unflinching sentry.

"But all such words are in vain — it is all too soon. But I seem to recall the words of a traditional Scottish song: 'There must be a place/under the sun/where hearts of olden glory/grow young.'" – *From the homepage of Praggers, "Brighton's user-friendly IT consultancy".*

● **"Have a Flutter In Honour of the Lady of the Races.** To celebrate the life of the Queen Mother, we've got you a special deal on betting for horse racing (and all other sports as well). The lovely people at bet365 will give you up to £20 FREE to place a bet with if you open up an account today. To take advantage of this special offer click here." – *Tribute from Internet company cyberbritain.com.*

● "Our thoughts are with the family and relatives of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, who died on 30 March 2002. As a mark of respect, the entire LocoWatch News website will be unavailable on Tuesday 9 April 2002." – *Announcement from LocoWatch ("your first choice for rail news on the Internet").*



"The 7.15 to Paddington is running late as a mark of respect to the Queen Mother"

The Hythe Imperial Hotel

AA ★★★★ RAC

SEASONAL CORPORATE EVENTS ASSISTPANTS

East Kent Mercury

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

NEVER known for its fast response to anything that needs attention, the South Bank Centre has been dragging its heels over the appointment of a new chief executive to replace Karsten Witt, who resigned last autumn when his board supposedly discovered the South Bank didn't need a chief exec after all.

Within a month of his departure, the board discovered quite the opposite. But nothing much happened – leaving the South Bank to stagger on, leaderless, through the final negotiations for a £50m refurbishment (which itself has been staggering on, with no visible results, for years).

But now the board has promised, through its sparkling new friends-in-high-places chairman Lord Hollick, that things are moving. A new chief executive will be announced next week. Official. But the appointment process is beginning to look less than squeaky clean: not least because two obvious leading candidates, Andrew Jowett (chief exec of Birmingham Symphony Hall) and Patrick Deuchar (ex-chief exec of the Royal Albert Hall) have been pointedly ignored.

Both Jowett and Deuchar have made it clear they want the job. Both are superlatively qualified. But neither has even been invited for interview, still less put on the shortlist. Something curious is going on here. But whatever it is, the South Bank needs to get its chief exec in place *tout de suite*, having been condemned the other week by the Commons select committee on culture as a "squalid, seedy and menacing environment". As the committee said: "Decisive action must be taken." One can only hope it's also taken openly and honestly.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

TONY BLAIR's roving Middle East envoy, the businessman Lord Levy, has hit back at *Sunday Times* revelations about his contract with Australian property developer Westfield. But alleging impersonation and dirty tricks by the hacks isn't the wisest move: Levy's new chums Down Under are themselves involved in a scandal involving dirty tricks and impersonation!

Westfield, a property giant looking to expand in Britain, paid Levy more than £100,000 for "consultancy" while developing ministerial contacts in Labour's latest cash-for-access scandal. Levy tried to rubbish the story by claiming that an impersonator had contacted Westfield pretending to be him in an effort to learn details of his contract. But Westfield was unlikely to be caught out by such a ruse – thanks to its experience of operating a similar scam in Australia itself.

Westfield hired consultant there, Ken Hooper, to see off a rival property developer. Hooper, like Levy, was a man with political contacts, having been an adviser to two Australian Liberal party MPs.

Hooper earned his fees by trying to scotch the proposed building of a £675m office, retail and entertainment precinct near one of Westfield's existing sites. His solution was to create a fictitious campaign group of local residents opposed to the new development. He set up the bogus North Strathfield Residents' Action Group for Westfield, and sent out leaflets and pamphlets against the rival development in the name of the non-existent campaign, using his girlfriend's name as a contact.

When he was rumbled Hooper denied involvement and launched legal proceedings. But his associate admitted the whole dodge and Westfield's boss Frank Lowy – one of Australia's richest men – was forced to apologise.

THE *Sunday Times* also suggested that busy Lord Levy is a paid consultant for BEA Systems, and also works for international privatiser Vivendi.

Vivendi, known around the world for paying subsidies and bribes to politicians, knows all about the value of mixing business and politics. The company is run by Jean-Marie Messier, a former French privatisation minister turned fat cat businessman.

In the UK Vivendi rail subsidiary Connex is a Labour donor; and former Tory environment secretary John Selwyn Gummer is now Vivendi UK's environment director. Barry Sheerman, Labour MP for Huddersfield, is a paid member of the environmental board of Vivendi subsidiary Onyx. The company also funds the New Local Government Network, a key Labour-linked think tank. Despite its largesse in some quarters, however, Vivendi trains are still late and its water and waste businesses are still being caught spewing out pollution.

THREE of the top executives at PFI giant Capita shared a massive £7.5m in pay and shares last year, but what did they do to deserve this sum?

One of the firm's greatest achievements in 2001 was running the government's individual learning account (ILA) scheme. Crapita had a £50m contract to run the scheme over five years, but on 24 October 2001 education secretary Estelle Morris announced that the programme was to be suspended from 7 December because of a flood of complaints that fraudsters were abusing it.

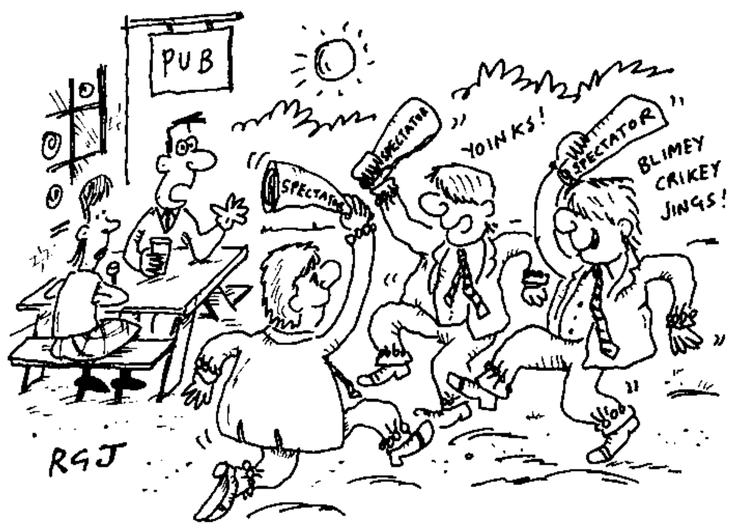
The police investigated and on 10 April the education select committee met to discuss what went wrong. It emerged that it should have been obvious from the start that the scheme was open to abuse… but Crapita had failed to warn the government of this. When MPs asked Crapita representatives why, they had no reply.

EARLIER this year Lib Dem frontbencher Matthew Taylor asked the chancellor "what role he has given to Geoffrey Spence relating to PPPs [public-private partnerships]." The gloriously "new" Labourspeak answer came from cabinet minister Andrew Smith, chief secretary to the treasury. "Geoffrey Spence's role at Partnerships UK is to provide the treasury with a dedicated senior professional resource to advise on the development and implementation of PPPs."

No one could be better qualified. Spence is managing director of Deutsche Bank, which is arranging the bond issue for the most controversial PPP of all – the effective privatisation of London Underground.

When Tony Blair and transport secretary Stephen Byers put Railtrack into administration and told shareholders to whistle for their money, the City rose in revolt. Almost at once the government backed down and gave the shareholders all their money back (£300m). A "senior infrastructure expert" in the City was quoted in the *Evening Standard* on 26 March as saying: "It is abundantly clear that part of the reason the government stepped up to the plate on Railtrack was because of fears about tube funding."

In other words the companies marked out by the chancellor for investment in the tube had threatened not to invest a penny unless the Railtrack shareholders got their money back. Now, all is peace. Investment "roadshows" for the hopeful tube companies, organised by the dedicated senior professional Mr Spence, are going very well indeed.



"Oh no! Boris dancers"

OH DEAR… The private part of yet another public private partnership has gone bust. Global Crossing, once an international telecom "giant", has filed for bankruptcy and at least two government departments are mired in the mess.

In May 2000 the foreign office signed a deal with the company to provide phone and data connections to all Britain's embassies. The then foreign secretary Robin Cook gushed: "This contract, and our new partnership with Global Crossing – one of the world's leading telecommunications companies – will provide us with a solid foundation for our future communications needs and take the FCO into the internet age." Cook's successor Jack Straw has now admitted that the foreign office is putting in "contingency arrangements" to keep the embassies online.

The home office too is in trouble. In October 2000 it signed a £350m private finance initiative deal with Global Crossing and ICL to supply telephones, computing and "business consultancy". It described the 10-year deal as "another leap forward". Since when ICL has been absorbed into its parent Fujitsu… and Global Crossing is up the creek without a paddle.

FORMER *Daily Telegraph* columnist Sion Simon has yet to break sweat in his new role as a backbench Labour MP. Interviewed in *Anticipations*, the journal of the Young Fabians, he was asked which policy areas he is concentrating on.

"I don't have any. I am deliberately not focusing on anything," he revealed. "It's a very strange job being an MP. You have to be here an awful long time, 14 hours a day, but only two of them are structured. In the rest of the time people concentrate on their specialisms… But it's not really me, so I am writing a fiction book, and I'm planning a political book. Reading a lot, thinking a lot."

Good that taxpayers are getting such value from Mr Simon.

SIR – Quentin de la Bedoyere's problem (letter, Mar. 15) with straddling a bicycle in later years is simply solved. I myself have had many difficulties getting my leg over since passing the age of 60.

Letter to Daily Telegraph

DISGRACED former minister Peter Mandelson has returned home to advise "new" Labour spin doctors to "relax" more in dealings with the press.

But Mandy's advice has incensed the left-wing Campaign Group of Labour MPs, which includes such luminaries as Dennis Skinner, Jeremy Corbyn and Diane Abbott. It has just released the following blistering press release: "Mandy's back in Britain again, ready and willing to trot around dishing out the spin. Just like old times. Unfortunately for Blair and the mastermind of the New Labour experiment, the days are long gone when a wistful word from Mandy's ascerbic tongue was all that was needed to march people back into line." Ouch!

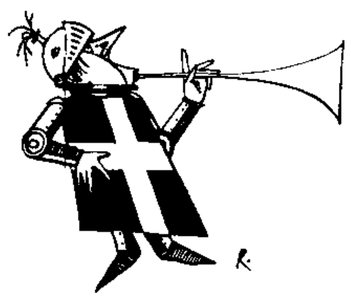
NEWSREADER Peter Sissons may feel bruised after the row about his burgundy tie, but he can take solace from the experience of Michael Foot, the former Labour leader who was ridiculed for the coat he wore on Remembrance Day at the Cenotaph 100 years ago.

Foot had just been elected leader of the Labour party and had swapped his traditional duffle coat – *de rigueur* on those Aldermaston marches – for a dark, knee-length Reefer coat. After Labour MP and deputy whip Walter Johnson accused Mr Foot of "being dressed like a navvy", the media went bananas and the offending item – bought from Jaeger by Michael's wife Jill – was exiled to the wardrobe, where it remains to this day.

But not everyone took exception to Foot's coat, it seems. "The Queen Mother was very admiring of my coat," he now recalls. Apparently she told him: "It's an awfully nice coat… a very sensible coat to wear on a day like this."

HP Sauce continued p. 8 ➡

EYE TOLD YOU SO



"WHILE milords Sainsbury and Gavron grab the headlines," we noted two years ago, in *Eye* 986, "another of 'new' Labour's big benefactors has escaped attention altogether: Isaac Kaye..." Not any more. Last week police raided the offices of his Norton Healthcare business, and five other pharmaceutical firms, as part of an investigation by the serious fraud office into allegations that generic drug companies have colluded to overcharge the NHS.

Generics – drugs that are out of patent – are, in theory, far cheaper than their branded counterparts. In practice, however, it ain't necessarily so. The SFO inquiry follows the department of health's discovery that, for example, the prescription price of warfarin sodium (a blood-thinner) rose from 64p in 1996 to £4 in 2000.

One wonders why the authorities have taken so long to notice. Back in 1999, we reported that although the government hoped to cut costs by ordering doctors to change to generics, the cost of the drugs "has risen almost to the level of their copyrighted versions". Between 1998 and 1999, we pointed out, the price of a pack of thyroxin tablets from Norton Healthcare rocketed from £6.84 to an incredible £44.89. "The result is that Isaac Kaye's firm earns a fortune, but the NHS doesn't make the expected savings."

Perhaps as a token of his gratitude, Kaye donated £100,000 to Labour in June 1999. He also paid £10,000 to the London mayoral campaign of Frank Dobson – who, as health secretary, had encouraged the switch to generics.

Kaye seems like a quintessential "new" Labour backer: a secretive, globe-trotting tycoon who has a luxury apartment in Grosvenor Square and refuses to recognise trade unions at his firm because "they are not in line with company philosophy". He also has the obligatory interest in offshore finance – the I. Kaye Family Trust, worth about £50m, which is based in Guernsey.

Even by Tony Blair's flexible standards, however, Kaye is a surprising bedfellow: as a businessman in South Africa during the 1970s he helped finance the ruling National Party. The *Daily Express* revealed his apartheid connection on the very day in September 2000 when Nelson Mandela addressed the Labour conference, but the party was unabashed. "Nelson Mandela talked today about reconciliation," a spokesman said. "Mr Kaye has said he is a strong supporter of democracy. That is all we are saying about this other than to confirm he is a Labour Party donor."

But then he has always been generous to those who might reward him. In South Africa, his pharmaceutical group Alumina provided gifts to hospital administrators and prominent medical figures – including cars, payment of credit card bills, swimming pool equipment, TV sets and chandeliers. When the scandal was exposed, Kaye denied that he had tried to buy influence: "Gifts were given to some medical practitioners not as an inducement, but in appreciation of their having prescribed drugs marketed by the Alumina group." However, the official inquiry into the allegations said Kaye "pursued success and in the process had no scruples about applying dishonest or unethical methods".

After relocating to London in the mid-1980s he continued to bestow his little kindnesses. In 1996 his Norton Healthcare company was severely condemned by the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry for offering "unacceptable inducements" after chemists were promised mountain bikes, Marks & Spencer vouchers and other goodies if they increased their order for Norton products.

And now the serious fraud office is rummaging through his files. Though a prosecution is said to be "not imminent", if charges are eventually brought against Kaye no doubt Tony Blair will be happy to appear as a character witness for his benefactor.

TAX CUTS FOR THE RICH

WHILE hard-pressed middle-class, middle income earners bear the brunt of Gordon Brown's budget tax rises, the chancellor has been generous in at least one area: he's given a whacking great tax break to the richest companies in Britain.

On 26 March the treasury and Inland Revenue jubilantly published press releases under the typically "new" Labour heading "Supporting Innovation" in which they announced "tax credits" for "large UK companies".

In last year's budget Brown tentatively suggested a plan to extend tax relief for big companies by allowing them not to pay tax on increased spending on research and development. The case for such relief was that companies would be encouraged to increase research spending. The plan was put out to what is laughably known as a "consultation exercise".

The government's scheme for relief on increased spending was replied to by 27 companies that would benefit from the tax relief; 11 accountancy and legal firms (which would also benefit); and 10 trade associations, consisting entirely of companies that would also benefit. In the course of the "consultation exercise" a new idea was born. Instead of getting tax relief on *increased* R&D spending, the companies and their acolytes suggested they might get tax relief on *all* R&D spending.

This idea was overwhelmingly supported by the companies that stood to gain from it. They were asked, in effect: "Would you rather pay more tax or less tax?" Unanimously and magnanimously they decided they would rather pay less. The chancellor and his advisers have now agreed to scrap their original suggestion in favour of what the companies proposed. So now the biggest and richest companies will be paying very much less tax this year than last.

How much less? The precise sum wasn't available as the *Eye* went to press before budget day. But a strong clue was to be found in the accounts of the biggest beneficiary of the new hand-out, the enormous multinational drugs company GlaxoSmithKline. In what was probably a cock-up, the Inland Revenue press release about the new scam originally published the extent of the new tax credit – 20 percent. GlaxoSmithKline spends £1bn a year on research and development. So the new credit will allow the firm to deduct £200m a year from its tax bill. With corporation tax at 30 percent, this will mean a net annual credit to one of the richest companies in the world of £60m – for doing what it would certainly be doing anyway even if the tax credit had never been thought of.

The news has been greeted with dismay among rank and file tax collectors who recall a bitter legal battle with Glaxo some years ago. In December 1995 the firm appealed against a high court decision in favour of the Revenue over Glaxo's tax assessments based on the prices of goods bought and sold by the company to and from subsidiaries abroad. The scam, know ironically to Revenue experts as "the Singapore grip", worked by paying a factory abroad (in this case, in Singapore) too much for what it produces, inflating its profits in Singapore and thus cutting them down in countries like Britain where the firm is taxed at the normal rates.

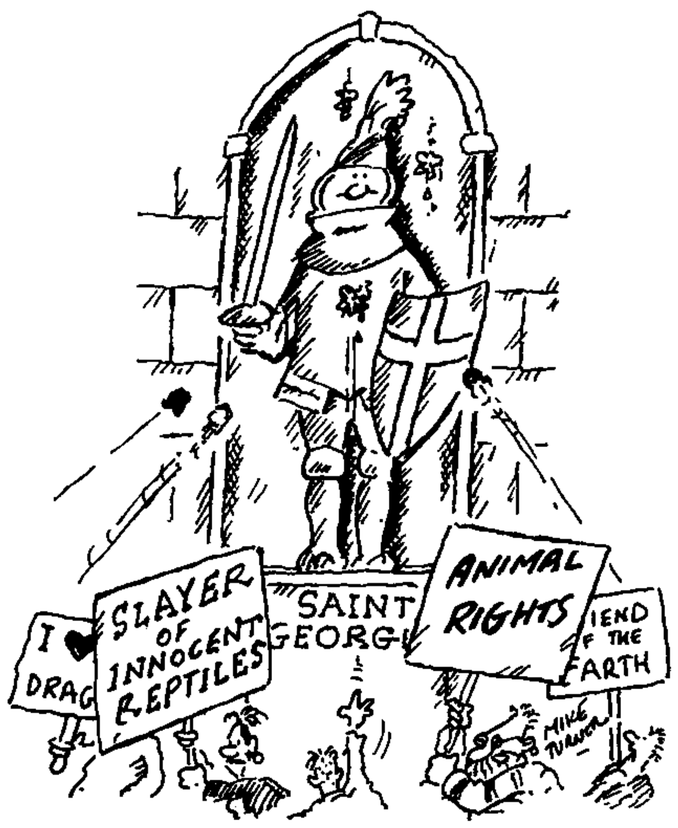
Glaxo lost the case at the court of appeal, a decision that cost it many millions (though no more than what it was originally paying). A Tory government was then in office. Now, "new" Labour, in the shape of its "iron chancellor", is handing out many more millions at the expense of the taxpayer than the lucky company directors can ever have imagined.

PS: GlaxoSmithKline is so poor it can only pay its chief executive Pierre Garnier £6m a year.

PPS: Sir Richard Sykes, company chairman, sits on the government's precious Council for Science and Technology (chair: Patricia Hewitt, trade and industry secretary).

PPPS: The tax credit for big companies is a triumph for the Inland Revenue's Large Corporates Forum, which, as revealed in recent *Eyes*, consists of big businessmen and Inland Revenue chieftains all striving to shift control of the Revenue from government servants to tax avoiders.

GlaxoSmithKline's tax director Nicholas Dee attended meetings of the Large Corporates Forum on 18 January 2000, 31 October 2000, and 11 January 2001. The idea for this latest tax break was first announced in the budget in March 2001.



Ken Livingstone's St. Georges Day Parade

Lords: Debates on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and public services;

The Daily Telegraph

ANTI-SEMITISM UPDATE

ANOTHER enlightened missive from the pen of Lady Michele Renouf, the supporter of right-wing historian David Irving (see *Eye* 1051), has come to the *Eye's* attention.

In November 2001 Renouf wrote to the *Evening Standard* about Irving's failed libel action against Prof Deborah Lipstadt who had described him as a "holocaust denier". The high court judge in the case found against Irving, deeming him a racist and anti-semite. Renouf wrote that "we could have understood what 'Goliath global endeavour' David Irving's libel trial illustrates his action was up against" if Lipstadt had complied with Irving's request to recite "that unifying prayer on Yom Kippur which authorizes that Jews may lie in a gentile (non-Jewish) court of law".

Unsurprisingly the *Standard* could not find room on its letter page for Renouf's bonkers claim that all Jews may in religious good conscience break the laws of the land. Instead a copy of the letter has found a home on the particularly nasty right-wing website of the Historical Review Press.

Meanwhile the Reform Club has not yet seen fit to follow the *Eye's* suggestion and bar Renouf, although it banned Irving from the premises after he attended a dinner at the club as her guest in April 2000. Her continued membership has caused disquiet among members. One former member, Robert Zeff, who was vocal in his disapproval of Renouf for bringing Irvine to the club, resigned last December and says he would "rather go out gardening" than keep such company.

DOING THE ROUNDS

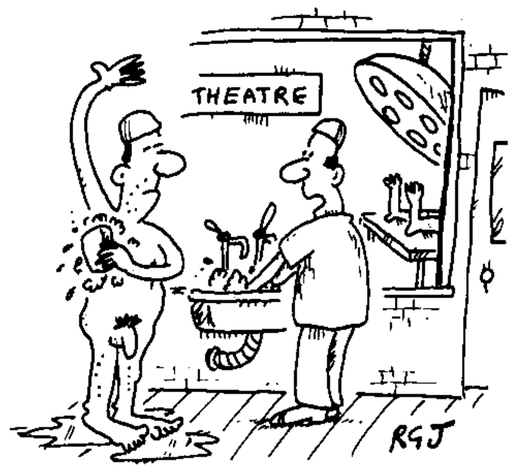
Hip hop

WOULD you let someone hammer a lump of untested metal into the top of your thigh bone? It happens every day in the UK.

Hip replacements may be one of the success stories of post-war medicine, with 70,000 a year put in. But 10 percent of them fail to make it to 10 years and some pack up much sooner, requiring a bigger and more painful revision operation. And yet, of the 60-odd different artificial hips used in the NHS and private sector, only a few have good published results over 10 years to show that they work. The vast majority are not tested in humans prior to launching and not monitored afterwards.

Unsurprisingly, problems aren't picked up until a lot more damage has occurred. Patients given a new hip are reluctant to admit it isn't working and often suffer in silence rather than seek help. Of those who do, 2,000 a year are told their hip prosthesis has failed. The recent recall of the DePuy International prosthesis, because the sterilisation process made it brittle and prone to excessive wear and tear, is one of the few disasters to be picked up. As Professor Chris Bulstrode, an orthopaedic surgeon at Oxford, put it: "There must be at least 20 hip models currently on the market that are frankly dangerous."

In 1997 M.D. campaigned for a compulsory national register of orthopaedic implants, as in Sweden, to ensure problems were quickly picked up and acted on. Five years later the rapid response department of health still hasn't decided who should run the registry, and reporting won't be mandatory. The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (Nice) has set targets for hip prosthesis performance over



"You can take scrubbing up too far, you know, Dr Timkins"

five and 10 years, but unless the audit is properly resourced and mandatory, these will be meaningless.

Most surgeons are too busy cutting waiting lists to monitor their own performance, and in any case, audit should be independently collected to avoid bias. The fact that "new" Labour, for all its bluster about quality, has not even managed to get a compulsory register running to protect patients from unnecessary harm from one of the commonest operations around shows how committed it is.

Surgeons aren't entirely blameless either. As one put it: "Drug companies are not much different from arms manufacturers. They fly us all out to Florida, pamper us, brainwash us and then get us to use their latest fancy prosthesis." And once a surgeon's got hooked on a particular gadget, dodgy or not, he tends to stick with it. "I personally would never use the Ring Hip but I know senior surgeons who still do. It's all they know."

The absurdity of the current tick-box regulation of prostheses by the Medical Devices Agency was exposed by the scandal of the Capital hip, marketed by 3 M Healthcare. The MDA can't be bothered to assess products, it just lets manufacturers apply for a stamp of approval from a variety of "notified bodies" in the EU. Hence the Capital hip got a meaningless "CE" mark attesting to its "non-toxicity" and "fitness for intended purpose". It was hammered into 4,700 NHS patients, and although the national audit office (NAO) flagged up a possible design fault in 1995, the MDA didn't get round to advising Capital patients to have their hips examined until 1998.

The MDA has introduced a new (voluntary) reporting system for adverse incidents. It's also passing the buck to Europe by asking for legislative changes to ensure better clinical data before a prosthesis is launched. But given that some orthopaedic surgeons have been lobbying for a national register for decades, I wouldn't hold your breath. When a hip cement called Boneloc was found to have a high failure rate by the Swedish register, it had been used in only 15 patients. In Britain, it was used on 1,800.

Back in 1993 the *British Medical Journal* warned that the "fashion trade in joint replacements is costing the health service millions of pounds each year and, even more important, is causing patients unnecessary pain and distress through early failure of unproved implants." Nearly a decade later, the system of introducing new prostheses is still no more evidence-based than the fashion industry.

So, what should you do if you're waiting for a new hip? The Charnley, Stanmore, Elite and Exeter have good track records. And they wouldn't have stuck any old rubbish in the Queen Mum – she had a Furlong. But the experience of the surgeon is also crucial. A study published in the *Journal of Bone Medicine* in 1996 found that replacements carried out by junior trainees were 11 times more likely to need a revision compared to consultant operations. Good luck!

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

WHEN David Goddard, who runs a medium-size dairy farm near Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire, read an article from the *Irish Examiner* he rubbed his eyes in disbelief. It described how an Irish farmer with a herd of 30 cows can make a comfortable living producing 182,000 litres of milk a year, at an average of just over 6,000 litres per animal.

Like almost every other dairy farmer in the UK, faced with the recent collapse in UK milk prices by up to 5p a litre, way below the cost of production, Mr Goddard has been at his wits' end, wondering how he can survive. Yet he has 130 Holsteins, producing a million litres at an average of 8,400 litres each. How is it, he mused, that the Irish can make a living from production levels we left behind in the 1960s, while British farmers with herds 30 percent more efficient are going out of business at a rate of hundreds a month?

The most obvious reason the UK milk price has fallen through the floor is that the UK market is awash with cheap milk imported from Ireland and the continent. But hang on. Why, if British farmers are 30 percent more efficient, can't they afford to sell their own milk at a competitive price?

The explanation is, firstly, that the milk price is set in euros and the devaluation of the euro means that these euroland farmers start at a massive 15 percent price advantage. Secondly, thanks to the Brussels milk quota system, the continental and Irish producers have huge surpluses which they can afford to offload into Britain at knockdown prices.

Thirdly, Irish, French and German farmers have governments who do everything they can to assist them, with tax breaks, hidden subsidies and imaginative use of the rules of the common agricultural policy (CAP). Meanwhile the UK government seems convinced we have far too many small and medium-size dairy farmers, and is happy to see them melting away like snow in the sun, even though they are more efficient than their competitors.

Nothing does more to explain the crisis now afflicting British farming across the board than the simple fact that British taxpayers are putting more than £5bn a year into the CAP and that only £2.2bn of this comes back to help British farmers. In other words, for every £1 we put in to help our own farmers, UK taxpayers send another £1.50 to help our competitors in other countries. It is hardly surprising our supermarket shelves are groaning under the weight of the cheaper meat, milk, fruit and veg Britain has paid other EU farmers to produce.

And do we hear Ben Gill and his friends in the NFU screaming how crazy this is? No. Their only answer to all these problems is that Britain must join the euro. What they forget to tell their poor bemused members is that, if we did so, we would only be allowed to enter at the present exchange rate, so that the massive disadvantage we are already suffering would remain forever.

'Muckspreader'

SIGNAL FAILURES

A lose-lose situation

THE £300m jackpot for Railtrack shareholders (*Eye* 1051) who gambled and lost is only the tip of the iceberg.

Shortly before Railtrack was privatised in 1996, a debt of £800m vanished from its books (*Eye* 891). This was to enable Railtrack to pay dividends and the write-off was effectively payment up front for the badly needed Thameslink 2000 scheme (Eye 972), which Railtrack would finish in 2002. Six years later there's no sign of Thameslink 2000 or the £800m.

Perhaps it would have been unfair for Railtrack plc to start life with its predecessor's debts and liabilities. By the same token, will shareholders cover any debts and liabilities left behind by Railtrack plc? Er, no.

Virgin Trains is thinking of suing for £700m because Railtrack plc's directors, sanctioned by the shareholders, were so incompetent they promised to upgrade the west-coast mainline before 2003 without having the faintest idea of their company's abilities or the scale of the work needed. If Virgin succeeds, the directors and shareholders will be safe: the new Network Rail will pay Virgin through reduced track-access fees, which means the taxpayer forks out yet again.

It remains to be seen if other companies will sue over losses arising from Railtrack's incompetence. That could be an easy way to boost subsidies and profits, since the government has promised to underwrite Network Rail and prefers not to contest even outrageous claims like those of Railtrack's shareholders.

An official investigation of the Great Western mainline has concluded that it needs "immediate, massive investment" and notes that punctuality has been declining since 1997. But Railtrack's shareholders won't foot the bill for restoring that and other lines to pre-Railtrack condition, even though Railtrack's decision not to renew worn-out assets (*Eyes passim*) was motivated by a desire to pay juicy dividends.

This is the legacy of Tory privatisation. Surely "new" Labour wouldn't be so stupid as to hand millions of pounds to a pisspoor company? Er, yes it would. It begged the mediocre bus operator Arriva, and gave it a huge subsidy increase, to take over the north-east rail franchise — with the result that thousands of trains were cancelled. Arriva wasn't booted out (the franchise isn't in the south-east and is rarely used by MPs or *Daily Mail* hacks) so thousands more trains were cancelled.

RICHARD Bowker, new chairman of the strategic rail authority (SRA), got a ringing endorsement from Whitehall's most eloquent high-flier when he asked for a formal job description.

Sir Richard Mottram, permanent secretary to the transport department, is famous for declaring during the Jo Moore spindoctoring debacle: "We're all fucked. I'm fucked. You're fucked. The whole department's fucked. It's been the biggest cock-up ever and we're all completely fucked." Mottram asked Bowker why he wanted a job description, to which Bowker replied that he wanted protection from being shafted like his predecessor, Sir Alastair Morton, was. Mottram's encouraging response was: "We shafted Alastair because he's a cunt."

'Dr B. Ching'

ITV

Queen Mother's Death (All channels)

FOR at least 15 years the BBC had been rehearsing the death of the Queen Mother. And, so the media village joke goes, for just as long the *Daily Mail* had been rehearsing its coverage of the BBC's Queen Mother coverage. On the day, though, it was the *Mail* which looked better prepared. Even those who don't believe in our press have to admit that when it comes to a royal death, no one does hysterical exaggeration, hypocritical allegation and 21-gun sanctimony like the British right-wing press.

You always suspected that the Queen Mum would naturally have read the *Daily Mail* for anything the *Sporting Life* couldn't give her; and she couldn't have died at a better time for the Associated Press stable or anyone else who hoped to make the BBC look bad when the moment came.

Despite its frequent dry-runs for the demise, the BBC can never have really thought HMQM would snuff it on a Bank Holiday Saturday while David Dimbleby was on hols and Jennie Bond was on a plane back from Klosters. Even if Michael Buerk had been duty newsreader, it might have been okay, as his sepulchral hamminess would have passed the *Mail* griefometer. But the roster threw up Peter Sissons.

While the *Mail*'s charges against Sissons – burgundy rather than black tie, insensitive questioning – were pretty ridiculous, BBC insiders also know that he wasn't on very good form. He seemed fluffy and unsure of basic names and facts. Even so, his flappiness partly resulted from the fact that it's hard to fill more than ten truly informative minutes about a death with no constitutional implications and no follow-up news angles.

Criticised by the *Mail* and others for screening only three hours of immediate tributes on BBC1 – and then showing the Tony Parsons drama *Man And Boy* as planned – the BBC had in fact already gone on longer than content justified. Already, Mary Nightingale on ITV1 was sounding like a host on Ruritanian State Broadcasting, barking out such questions as: "Likely military involvement in the funeral?" And – oddly – the *Mail* and other Beeb-bashers ignored the fact that ITV1 on the evening of the death screened a show with a Royal-punning title – *Victoria At The Albert* – in which Victoria Wood joked lengthily about her hysterectomy. Why was that not irreverence but Sissons's wine-dark tie was?

But the real bummer of the *Mail*'s attack on the first-day coverage was that it encouraged the BBC and other broadcasters to play safe. An imaginative idea in the corporation's funeral coverage – Simon Schama as main pundit – was neutralised when the American-tenured professor seemed largely minded to convince the *Mail* that he was much keener on monarchies than republics. What you really wanted was to hear the classy Schama on how the Queen Mother's qualities of ruthlessness and self-dramatisation saved the monarchy after the Abdication. But there was no place for real history.

While the presence of both Dimblebys can be irritating on general election night, blood-line casting makes more sense for royal events and so Dave on BBC1 and Jonty on ITV1 seemed fair enough. Less welcome – and a sign of the BBC's sheer terror of the *Mail* – was the summoning to the commentary box of Tom Fleming, a 74-year-old Scottish mummer who once played Lord Reith in a TV drama but otherwise seems to work only when a royal stops functioning.

What happens is pretty much what you'd expect when you put an elderly actor in the middle of what's supposed to be a journalistic operation. Fleming's trick is to deliver banalities as if they were Shakespeare in a voice that somehow resembles a booming whisper. But, as he's aged, a sly clubman's editorialising has crept in.

While Tony Blair glided down the aisle, he whisper-boomed: "The prime minister travels so much that he doesn't know which continent he's on from day to day, but he's home now for this sad occasion." Apparently being urged in his ear-piece to interrupt his honeyed flights by identifying the people shown in close-up, he at one point managed accidentally to suggest that Stephen Byers had been a key figure in the life of the Nation's Grandmother.

While DG Greg had been planning to update the BBC's coverage of state occasions, the *Mail* has forced a retreat into orthodox reverence. The problem was that with Sir Trevor playing brown-nosier than thou on ITV1, the coverage was all aimed at hardcore monarchists, and there was nowhere for the casually interested viewer to go. So organisations historically intended to provide an alternative to BBC news coverage – ITV1, Sky News – instead competed with the BBC to sound as antiquated and reverential as possible to earn brown-nose points from the *Mail* and *Daily Telegraph*.

When television became established, newspaper barons feared the new medium might put them out of business as a source of information. Not only did this not happen, but the elongated obsequies of a centenarian who was never head-of-state and died in nearly perfect circumstances showed us the dismaying extent to which, on royal matters, the tabloid press sets the agenda for what television does.

There may be no Queen Mum anymore but there is an equivalently powerful national figure in Media Dad Paul Dacre, editor of the *Daily Mail*. Television's universal reverence for his prejudices – and fear of his rod – marked a new low in broadcasting.

'Square Eyes'

Television choice

HOLLYWOOD GREATS
BBC One, 10.35pm
Doris Day (*above*) became America's favourite girl-next-door, with her cute little buck teeth, chirpy manner and bouncy blonde hair.

The Times

MEDIA NEWS

"ASSESSING the charges of dumbing down are notoriously tricky," writes Peter Horrocks, head of BBC current affairs, in *Ariel*.

His defence of BBC journalism, alas, is undermined by the huge graph showing "audiences in millions" for current affairs programmes, 2000-2001. The BBC produces 14 of the top 18 programmes on the list, topped by the *Festival of Remembrance*, which cynics would argue is not really current affairs at all, but at least pips ITV's *Terror in America* into second place.

What's revealing is the style of the BBC programmes on it: *Watchdog, Hard Cash, Watchdog Health Check, Car Wars, Lifting the Bonnet, Biggest Car Fraud, 4 x 4* - all driven by consumer stories, all designed to appeal to younger audiences with short attention spans.

Panorama is the only original current affairs programme on the list, likely to be interested in commissioning difficult stories – and that goes out on a Sunday night graveyard slot.

CELEB UPDATE!

"Rumours are flying around that Kate Moss is pregnant… but a spokesperson for Kate insists 'it's not true'",

– *Heat* Magazine, p44,
30 March-5 April edition.

"Everyone's talking about… Kate Moss being pregnant… Confirming that her baby is due in October Kate said she 'couldn't be more delighted' at the prospect of becoming a mother",

– *Heat* Magazine, p1,
30 March-5 April edition.

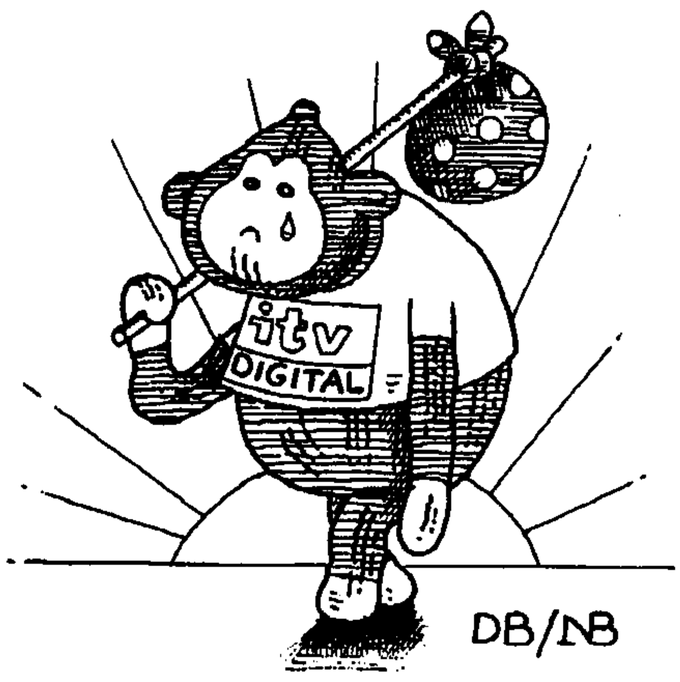
ITV must wish it had never bothered with football: it's sunk ITV Digital and caused the company massive embarrassment when no one watched its prime time Premiership programme.

Just to prove it is still on the ball, however, it has been lobbying media buyers to try to haul in advertisers for its world cup coverage this summer. A series of postcards signed by Des Lynam was sent out announcing that "2002 Fifa World Cup kicks off on Sunday 31 May". Having spent in the region of £80m acquiring the rights, ITV may be surprised to learn that the competition actually starts on the Friday before.

Meanwhile ITV's commercial and marketing director Jim Hytner scored an own goal when he sent out small, promotional cardboard boxes to advertisers and agencies, also promoting world cup coverage, in the same week that ITV Digital's descent into administration hit the headlines.

The boxes contained a mini football "for you to kick around the office" and red and yellow cards for armchair referees. In the current climate, perhaps Hytner should simply have filled the boxes with copies of his CV.

NEW OLD SAYINGS



Monkey can't buy you love

GOING LIVE

DESPERATE moments for lone hack Jonathan Swain when GMTV went live to him on a deserted Spanish beach for the "latest" on David Beckham's broken foot on 12 April.

The Argentine player who caused the injury was due to turn up for training "later today. I do hope he does, a lot of people want a word with him", said Swain. "I was talking to a lot of journalists here yesterday and they say he's very hard to track down," added the increasingly desperate reporter.

AD NAUSEAM

SHOCK, horror: rank hypocrisy hits adland! It's widely known in Soho that the numerous advertising awards ceremonies are a sham, with ads entered that have never been run, or that ran once in a little-known urinal in a Bognor backwater.

Because the ad never really appeared, it can be much more risqué, or "creative", than a genuine version. Hence fake ads tend to do pretty well and the writers who submit them get pay hikes based on the number of awards they win.

Such was the case last week when Ogilvy & Mather creative directors Nigel Roberts and Paul Belford – all set for a lucrative move to AMV - were stripped of an award for a press ad for UK Online. Someone twigged there were "significant differences" between what appeared in the press and what was submitted. Roberts and Belford were widely denigrated by their peers – models of probity one and all – and Mike Walsh, Ogilvy's European chairman, planted his flag firmly on the moral high ground. "This agency does not cheat to win. I will not employ people who behave in this manner."

Strangely, earlier this year Ogilvy's line on scam ads was somewhat more tolerant. In January its worldwide creative director Neil French took the unprecedented step of withdrawing from adland's biggest beano, the Cannes Advertising Festival, as a protest against a "blacklist" of agencies found guilty in the past of submitting ads that never ran. Bizarrely, French felt that naming and shaming might bias judges against certain agencies (which was surely the purpose), although he was keen to point out that "Ogilvy was not on that list. The fact we are exceedingly kosher in the way we do things allows me to take this stand."

With news of Roberts and Belford's aberration it looks like next year Ogilvy will top the blacklist, and rightly so.

LEVERAGE your manugistics: here comes another corporate rebranding and nobody does it better than the management consultants.

Like Accenture/Andersen Consulting before it, PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting is set to break away from its accountancy parent, which means more blanket advertising, millions of pounds for the brand consultancies (ie pick a different font) and, best of all, a ludicrous new name. Thanks to an internal PwC memo forwarded to the Eye, we now learn that employees of the company are being encouraged to come up with a silly name themselves.

"As we prepare to become one of the world's truly great organisations, it's time to get excited (if you aren't already) about what each and every one of us is about to create. First, we are going to select a new name. And I do mean 'we'. All of us will have the opportunity to participate in naming our new company. Please help us tap our best

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore

Salvador Dali G

thinking. It is an emotional subject on which everyone will have a point of view. And, of course, we must be prepared for a range of reactions from the media, whatever name we choose. So we would like to enlist your help… please join us in Namestorming!!"

DUMB BRITAIN

Dave Lee Travis show, Breeze FM

DLT *(former Pipeman Of The Year)*: In which European country are there people called Walloons?

Contestant: Wales.

This Morning, ITV

John Leslie: If you spoke Dutch, what country would you be from?

Contestant: Denmark.

The Weakest Link, BBC2

Anne Robinson: In which country is the river Po?

Contestant: Poland.

DUMB AMERICA

The Weakest Link, BBC2

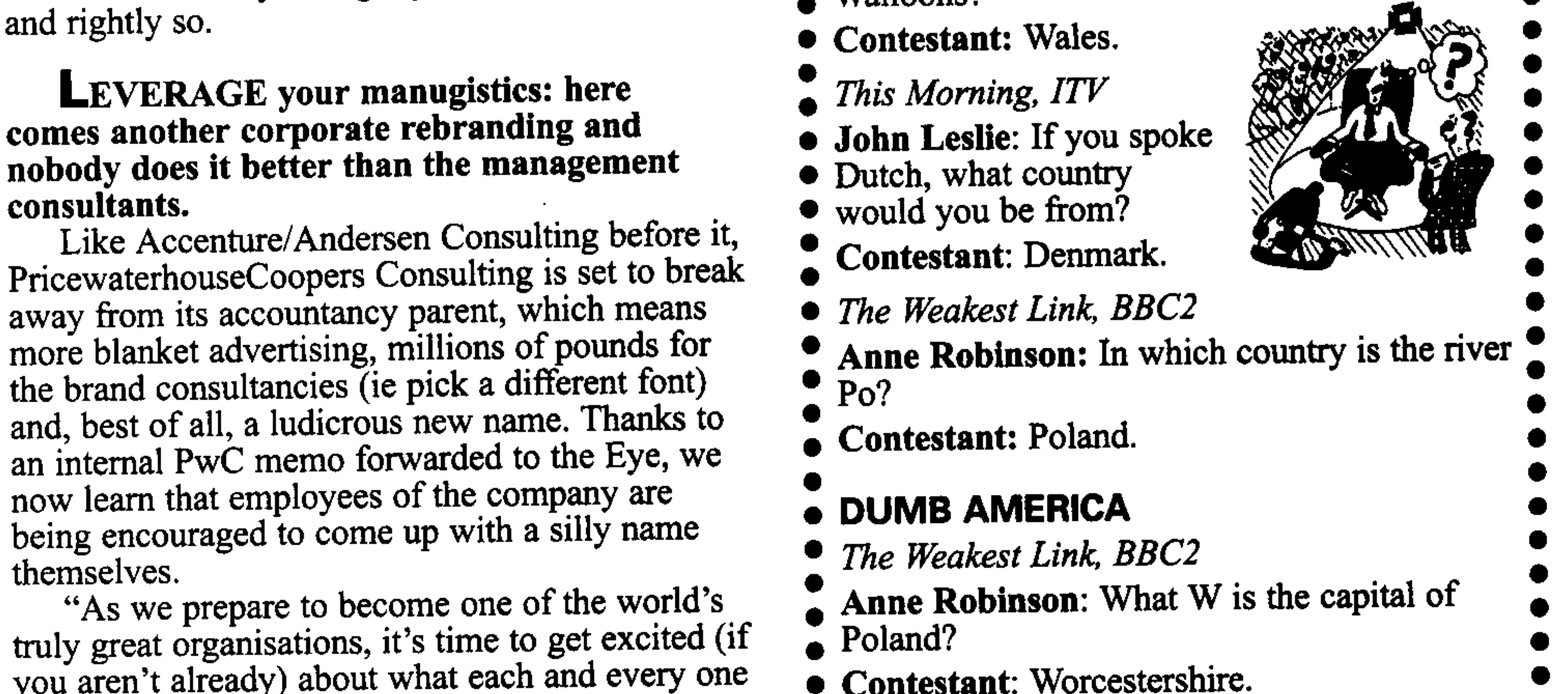
Anne Robinson: What W is the capital of Poland?

Contestant: Worcestershire.

(Answers: 1 Belgium. 2 The Netherlands. 3 Italy. 4 Warsaw.)

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


MARKS & SPENCER
IT'S ALL ABOUT BEING AWARE OF WHAT YOUNG STYLISH WOMEN WANT,... AND REALLY STUDYING WHAT'S GOING ON IN FASHION...
FASHION BLURB
...SO WE'RE GOING TO GET RID OF THE FOOD SECTION!

Plugged In

"People say that taking football on to Sky has ruined the sport for people who can't get Sky but I just don't buy that. Sky is important. Sky's made a difference. There wasn't much football on television before – terrestrial television never covered it well – we've added a whole new dimension to it."

BSkyB's football achor, Richard Keys, interviewed in the *Times* on 2 April by gorgeous pouting sports hackette Alison Kervin.

An occasional column devoted to cross-media plugs masquerading as news.

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

BUGGER RUGGER

BATH'S once-unbeatable rugby team has had a lean time in recent years and now teeters on the brink of relegation from rugby union's premiership. But this has not dented the confidence of the team's multi-millionaire owner Andrew Brownsword.

Brownsword, a greetings card tycoon, has applied for planning permission to build a new 16,000-seater stadium. The only problem is that the club's ground, The Rec, in the centre of the Georgian city, is a publicly-owned green space bequeathed "for the recreational purposes of all the people of Bath" — not just rugby fans.

However, Bath & North East Somerset council (Banes) has applied to the high court to see if the covenant can be overturned so the stadium can be built anyway. Critics of the plan do not understand why the club cannot relocate to the city's derelict western riverside, where there is lots of room for parking, unlike in the city centre. But Browntrouser would have to pay serious money for a new site, while the existing one is leased from the council on a peppercorn rent. And, down to his last £190m, languishing at number 173 on the *Sunday Times* rich list, Brownsword has to watch the pennies.

Banes is happy with this arrangement because it is itself eyeing up the riverside for a new HQ. Moving would enable Banes to pursue plans to turn the present council headquarters — Bath's handsome Guildhall — into a casino. The favourite to manage such a joint just happens to be the council's mysterious Dutch Antilles registered business partner, TDC, which will soon be running Bath's other main laundering facility... the new Spa complex (*Eyes passim*).

PS: Bath councillors have awarded themselves an allowance package which puts members of the new all Lib-Dem cabinet on £26,581 a year and ordinary members on £6,385 — a 52 percent increase. The dilemma of how councillors can have credible "green" credentials yet still keep their snouts in the trough has been solved by creating a new 40p-a-mile allowance for those who attend meetings by bicycle.

● **EVERYONE at the *Eye* is rooting for Brighton in its bid to be a European City of Culture. In the past year the "city" has seen a fine former theatre demolished to be replaced by shops, a cinema closed to make way for a casino and the public library converted into two bars. That's the spirit, Skidrow on Sea! Go for it!**

TWISTED AND BRENT

CONGRATULATIONS to Brent, named as one of 46 "beacon" councils last week. Another glittering prize to add to the Housing Team of the Year Award, picked up at the *Local Government Chronicle* awards last month

The sheer professionalism of the council's housing team is illustrated by the way it dealt with a tenant who has been waiting 12 years to be rehoused so she can be nearer her elderly parents and disabled sister. Hearing of a vacant one-bedroom flat in the right area, she visited Bent's "housing resource centre" at Mahatma Gandhi House in Wembley, only to be turned away and told she was wasting her time. She then received a letter which informed her that as she only had 135 housing points she didn't qualify for a move. The number required, the letter explained, was 135 points…

Meanwhile the number of families in expensive "temporary" B&B accommodation in the borough has doubled in recent years to around 700; homeless people face waits of up to seven hours at the re-housing centre and Brent still has some of the worst council housing stock in Britain.

Some of the gap between all the "beacon" bollocks and reality is simply explained. Brent is a "new" Labour council. It employs 23 spin doctors in a "communications & consultation unit" with a budget of £750,000 a year.

● **RED faces at the Braunstone Community Association in Leicester, where Zimbabwe-style rules to prevent critics being elected to a £50m regeneration scheme (*Eye* 1050) have backfired. The BCA had banned residents seeking election to its board from issuing leaflets, staging meetings or contacting the press, to try to stop anyone opposed to chief executive Tim Slack from coming aboard. The result? Five of Slack's keenest critics were elected, including Bill Law, the man who helped win New Deal funding for the estate, whom Slack had sacked days before. Ain't democracy grand!**

BRAVE NEWHAM WORLD

NEWHAM council chief executive "Dave" Burbage did not like the *Eye*'s story last August (1035) about the £11,000 pay rise, backdated for a year, awarded to Rita Davies, head of the council's "social regeneration" unit. Perhaps the fact that the lovely Rita was his fiancée had something to do with it.

He claimed officials of the trade union Unison were guilty of "gross misconduct" in revealing details of Davies's contract and then making comparisons with the council's mean-spirited treatment of lower paid staff. Burbage and council leader Sir Robin Wales reacted in a very "new" Labour way to the criticism – they derecognised the union.

The council's acting head of human resources Maria King attempted to broker a *rapprochement*, but it was vetoed by Burbage, according to Unison, although the council denies this. Now the council's 2,500 Unison members are set to embark on a series of one-day strikes. It's all very sad. But it was a lovely wedding.

TOW RAGS

INCENSED about a story in Eye 1050 which told how private contractor Drakes overcharged Westminster council £65,000 for deploying an extra tow truck, the company's MD Sidney Simcox clarified matters (Letters, Eye 1051) by explaining that he had instructed a manager, John Wood, "to raise an invoice for the sum that Drakes was entitled to claim under the contract". Wood, who Simcox alleged was responsible for the overcharging, was disciplined and given a final written warning.

Wood's GMB union rep lodged an appeal with Drakes because Wood was being made to carry the can for something he did not do. A central plank of the evidence against him was a witness statement by Sidney Simcox, who said: "John Wood led me to believe that the vehicle was being deployed for over 100 hours a week." Wood utterly denies this.

Wood's appeal will be heard by none other than Sidney Simcox. Which means that, if it is to be upheld, Simcox will have to find against his own evidence. Can't get more impartial than that, can you?

● **HACKNEY council is taking part in a pilot scheme on 2 May in which there will be no polling stations, every vote in the council election being cast by post. Some feel the choice of Hackney for such an experiment is bizarre, given that a year ago two of its councillors were jailed for a massive electoral fraud — involving scores of bogus postal votes.**

EDUCASHUN NEWZ

THE state education system is a boom area for private firms thanks to "new" Labour's love affair with public private partnerships (PPPs) — and nowhere more so than in Bristol.

Last month when Bristol city council faced a final deadline to respond to improvement notices issued by the health and safety executive (HSE) over the state of playground equipment in schools, together with a repair bill of up to £100,000 and potential court action, it brought in a firm called Continental Landscapes to inspect and assess the risks at the city's 166 schools.

Continental Landscapes, owned by the Dutch Krinkels group, is one of the biggest ground maintenance contractors in Britain. Since autumn 1998 it has held a contract worth £153,364 a year to maintain grounds in Bristol, and a £150,679 a year contract to maintain public playgrounds. A spokeswoman for the city council said Continental Landscapes was brought in to carry out the safety checks because it was best placed to do so, but in a remarkable example of "best value" the firm has now been contracted to do some of the repair work it has recommended.

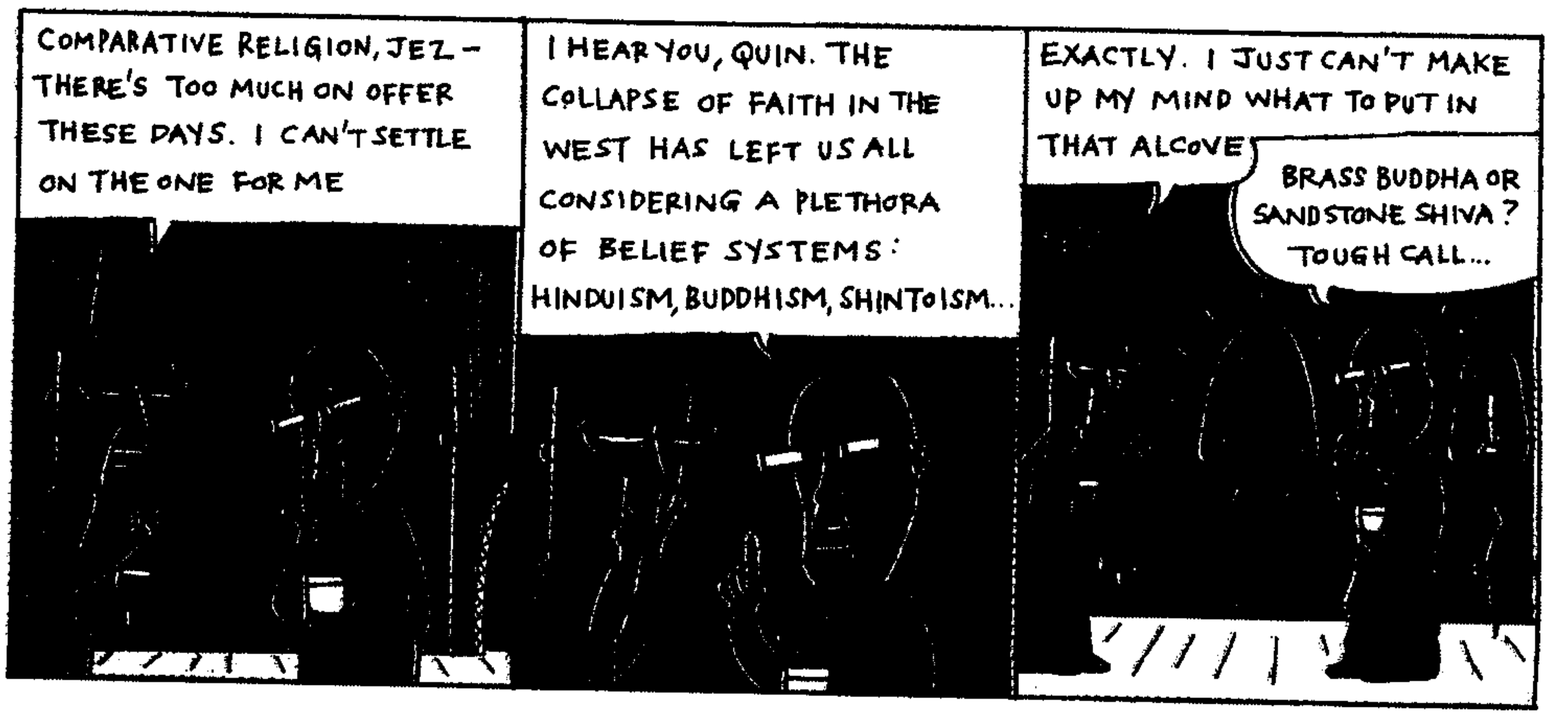
A row is also raging in the city over the decision to close two secondary schools following a report into one of the schools by management consultant Arthur Andersen which suggested that it was losing popularity. Lib Dem councillor Sean Emmet has asked if education staff are under "political pressure to distort the truth" and has accused the council of bringing in Andersen to "stitch up" the two schools, which the council's education leader Peter Hammond strongly denies.

Schools in Bristol can expect to see links with private firms strengthened under the city's new temporary education director Simon Jenkin, who was so outraged by Cllr Emmet's comments that he demanded they be stricken from the official record.

Back in 1998 Jenkin was brought in as a consultant to Calderdale in Yorkshire after the education authority there was slammed by Ofsted in the row over the Ridings school in Halifax (see *Eyes passim*). After writing a blistering report about the Calderdale authority, Jenkin was taken on for a further three months to implement the action plan he had proposed. His next move was to Islington where he oversaw the take-over of the education authority by private contractor Cambridge Education Associates in 1999. He continues to work two days a week for the education department in the London borough of Haringey, which went into partnership last year with the *Eye's* favourite PFI firm, Crapita.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

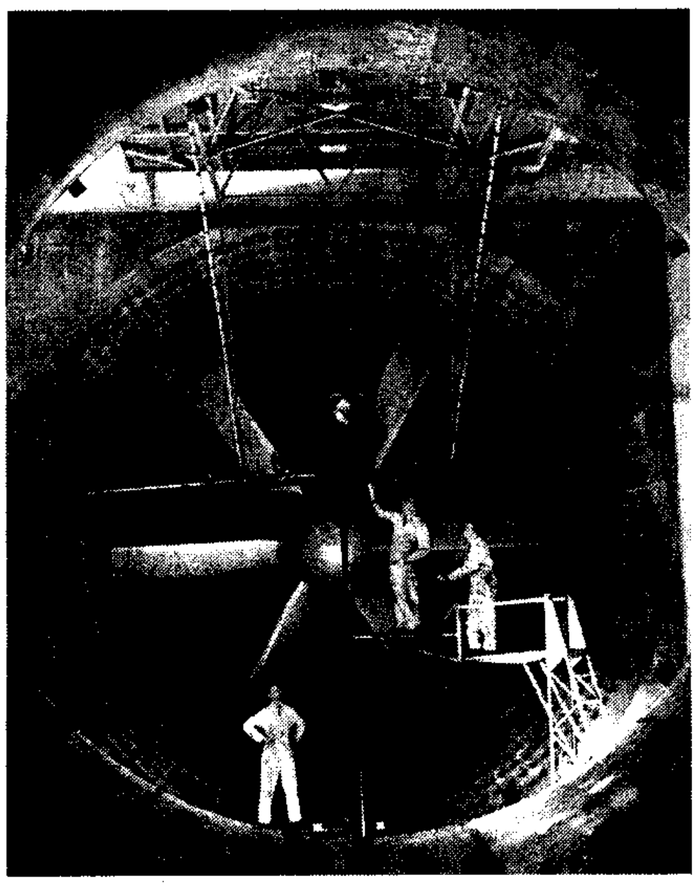
KNIFE & PACKER


COMPARATIVE RELIGION, JEZ – THERE'S TOO MUCH ON OFFER THESE DAYS. I CAN'T SETTLE ON THE ONE FOR ME
I HEAR YOU, QUIN. THE COLLAPSE OF FAITH IN THE WEST HAS LEFT US ALL CONSIDERING A PLETHORA OF BELIEF SYSTEMS: HINDUISM, BUDDHISM, SHINTOISM...
EXACTLY. I JUST CAN'T MAKE UP MY MIND WHAT TO PUT IN THAT ALCOVE
BRASS BUDDHA OR SANDSTONE SHIVA? TOUGH CALL...

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE GOVERNMENT has little patience with old buildings. It declines to reform the punitive rate of VAT imposed on repairing them; it talks of "speeding up the planning process"; and now a green paper proposes the abolition of statutory consultation with the amenity societies over listed building applications. You might think that when it comes to modern heritage, to the aspects of Britain that are forward-looking, dynamic, enterprising and progressive, representing the modern world and the future, the government might care. But you would be wrong.

The former Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough, Hants, was the "Cradle of British Aviation". Flying (in balloons) began there in 1905 and the first powered flight in Britain took place there in 1908. It housed research into jet propulsion; new designs were tested there; and, in the post-war decades when Britain still tried to sustain an independent aircraft industry, it was home to the celebrated Farnborough Air Shows. Surely all this is something of which we might be justifiably proud, or at least seriously interested in? But the site is being cleared and the future of the remaining structures is horribly uncertain.



Farnborough was decommissioned and vacated by the ministry of defence in 1998. Just as the department of health has cynically sold countless redundant hospitals and asylums to developers, so the MoD sold off the Royal Aircraft Establishment to the highest bidder: Slough Estates.

Recognising its importance and mindful of what might happen, English Heritage had already made a careful survey of the RAE site and made suggestions for listing the structures it concluded were of historical significance. However, having been nobbled by the MoD (anxious not to impede market forces) and by members of the cabinet of John Major's government (Michael Heseltine), the department of the environment either ignored or watered down the recommendations. For instance, the amazing and unique 24-foot diameter wind tunnel which EH proposed for grade I protection was only listed at grade II*.

Why do we care so little? The equivalent structure at Chalais Meudon near Paris has been made a Monument Historique by the French government (the highest level of protection); and what remains at the celebrated Johannistal test airfield at Berlin has been preserved and is to be at the centre of a new technology and science park. But only at Farnborough did so much survive as a coherent whole.

Slough ("Come friendly bombs...") Estates wants to make a science and business park there, but the interesting historical and technological structures surviving are just a nuisance to it. Since 1998 many key buildings have been demolished — including the 1905 airship gondola factory — and everything between the 23 acre core "development brief area" (only 13 percent of the whole site) and the runway has been bulldozed (the runway will survive to enable executives to land in their personal jets).

As usual in England it is volunteers who have done most to preserve this unique relic of our scientific pre-eminence. The Farnborough Air Sciences Trust (FAST) has made a collection of historical material — documents and artefacts, many rescued from MoD skips — which is now stored in the (unlisted) 1916 wind tunnel building. But nothing is safe as Slough Estates still intends to demolish more structures and carry out a "soft strip" of the wind tunnel buildings.

SAVE Britain's Heritage has now published a fascinating, if depressing, report on Farnborough and its significance entitled Enough has been Bulldozed! (£5 from 70 Cowcross Street, EC1M 6EJ) and has called for the department of culcha, media 'n' sport to upgrade and extend the listings to what EH recommended. It has asked Rushmore borough council to make the whole site a conservation area — the obvious solution. Needless to say there is a deafening silence from the DCMS while Rushmore council is too feeble to dare to endanger the "jobs" promised by Slough Estates.

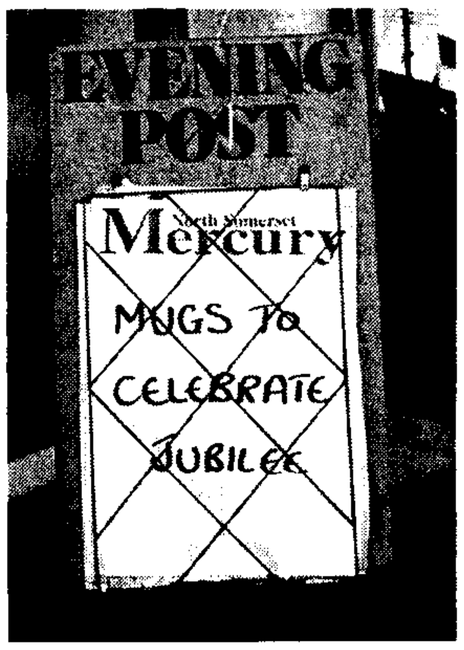
Not that SAVE is proposing to make Farnborough into yet another museum — something our government would loathe. But it points out that all the surviving buildings form a coherent whole and that most are eminently suitable for reuse rather than demolition (even the MoD sales brochure emphasised the historic importance of the site. And it is also about time the general public was allowed to see what is there. This is not mere nostalgia.

Who knows, if a schoolchild could see the great wind tunnel and understand what it did, he or she might be inspired to participate in the great Blairite vision for Britain of a white hot technological future.

'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH



I-SPY

Cheddar, Somerset

Submitted by Jeff Brewster.

£10 paid for similar submissions.

(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)

LIBRARY NEWS

ONE of the largest collections of freely available art books in the country, the Bristol Art Library with a stock totalling 39,000, is under threat for the second time in five years.

Under changes proposed by chief librarian Kate Davenport, the post of the specialist art librarian who has nearly 30 years of experience will be changed to cover general library duties. The assistant art librarian, meanwhile, whose post was also due to be generalised, has chosen to move to a new job at the BBC.

Supporters of the library are furious about the restructuring and have formed an independent campaign group called the Friends of Bristol Art Library. In 1997 the art library was moved from specially designated premises to become part of the central reference library and its budget cut to £2,500. The council promised at the time that the art librarian would still be available to answer reader inquiries, but he is now just as likely to be doing general library work and there is no provision to replace him when he retires.

Less than a fifth of the collection is on the computer catalogue, and without the expert guidance of the art librarian many readers will find it virtually impossible to find what they are looking for. When the art library first moved to the central reference library it was given its own room, but this has now been taken over to provide a free email centre.

Davenport has also indicated that the current stock will be lent out to local libraries rather than remain part of a central resource, a move which many believe would be disastrous. While Councillor Helen Holland, who has overall responsibility for libraries in Bristol, has promised there will be no reduction in stock, Davenport has said she cannot guarantee no books will be thrown away. Davenport's determination to diminish the art library is particularly piquant at a time when Bristol is bidding to become City of Culture 2008.

Letters

Mum was the word

Sir,

I was deeply shocked and appalled by the last issue of your magazine. There was a complete lack of satirical/ cynical/ outrageous/ slanderous/ disrespectful material on the demise of the Queen Mother. If I had a subscription I would cancel it.

Yours faithfully,
TOM HART,

Summertown, Oxford.

** Thanks for many similar letters. Due to Easter printing schedules, Eye 1051 went to press before the death of the Queen Mother was announced.*

Retirement robbery

Sir,

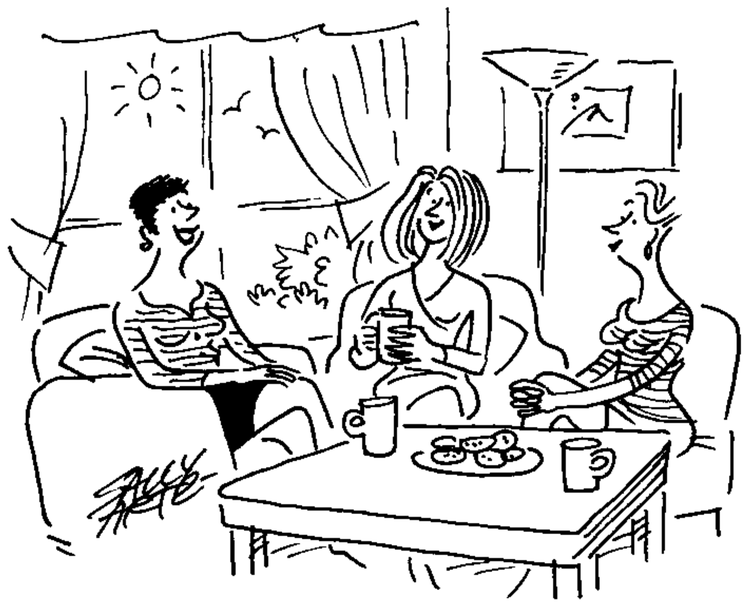
I refer to the cartoon by Appleton on page 29 of Private Eye 1051.

Your cartoonist could never have envisaged how right he was in the case of pensions provided by my erstwhile employer – a national engineering company of renown.

This company has already enjoyed a company pension contribution holiday for the past five years. Now we have on the one hand an actuarial valuation which discloses that the company is likely to enjoy a further 10 years of zero contributions to the fund. On the other hand, we received last week notice of next year's benefits giving pensioners a derisory increase of 0.7 percent. I ask you: "Is this fair?"

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT WESTWOOD,

Bromham, Bedfordshire.



"I love this time of year – when we change over from Delia's Winter Cookbook to her Summer one"

A pedant writes

Sir,

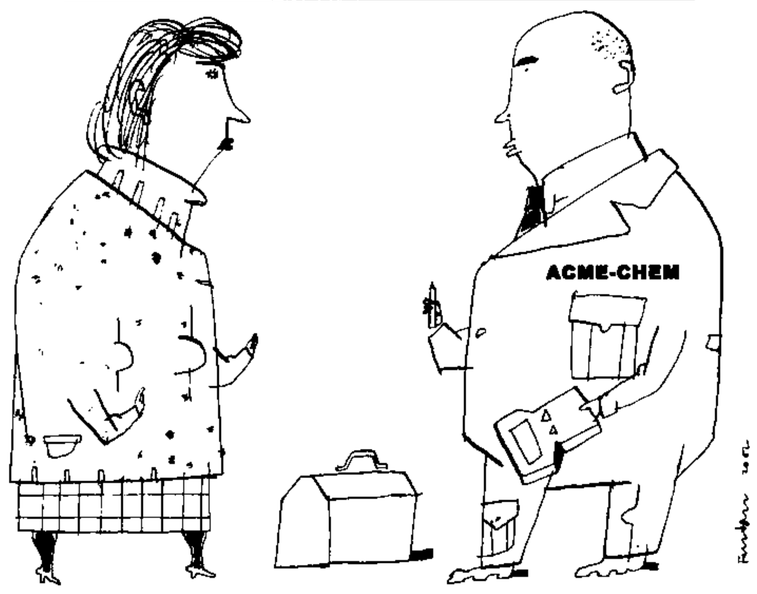
In Rotten Boroughs in Eye 1048 you included an article about Age Concern charity in Doncaster, in which the charity was criticised for receiving £50,000 for a "shopping for local oldies" scheme.

"Alas only 204 shopping visits were completed in 18 months – at a cost of some £245 per trip." Maybe it is because I am studying to be an astrophysicist and I have to do maths every day at uni, but I appear to be the only one to have noticed that 245x204=49,980. I wish you luck with your maths in the future,

Faithfully yours,
ANDREW BOUDA,

Czech Republic.

Scenes You Seldom See (8)



"Your house is fine – you don't need any chemical damp-proofing anywhere"

Ethics man

Sir,

Since your readers like a good laugh, perhaps they'd care to share a giggle about a little-known oxymoron – "journalistic ethics".

PressWise was set up by "victims of media abuse" some nine years ago to try to popularise this notion, but while we have found much enthusiasm overseas, in the UK for some strange reason only people with no money seem to like the idea.

As any kerb-crawler on the Street of Shame knows, lives can be wrecked by inaccurate or sensational media coverage. We provide free advice and support for people who fall foul of unwarranted media attention — but we are now so broke we may have to shut up shop.

Perhaps some of your regulars might wish to contribute to our rescue fund. All we need is £100,000 — a small price to pay to keep us snapping at the heels of those who give journalism a bad name.

Alternatively Lord Wakeham might like to donate two thirds of the salary he still receives as part-time chair of the Press Complaints Commission – despite being unavailable for work through pressures arising from his role in the Enron scandal. You couldn't make it up...

Sincerely,
MIKE JEMPSON, Director,

The PressWise Trust, Bristol.

ZzzzzBC

Sir,

As I am a stickler for accuracy, I had to point out that the Zimbabwean Broadcasting Corporation's acronym is ZBC and not ZTV as shown in the cartoon of Mugabe last issue. Dull as dishwater it is too.

I must also give some alternatives to B. Hall's amusing anagram (Buga Me!). One is E ba gum, the well-known Yorkshire exclamation. He is also known as RobMug – an abbreviation of Robbers and Muggers incorporated.

Yours,
ALAN EVANS,

Via email.

Jewry verdict

Sir,

Having recently carried out extensive research into contemporary anti-semitic conspiracy theories, I think I may have an answer to where the untraceable "Mr Sparks" has taken his information from (Anti-semitism update, 5 April).

The detailed rundown of the "Jewish media influence" in Britain seems to have been almost directly lifted from the popular anti-semitic website RadioIslam.net, run from Stockholm, Sweden, by Ahmed Rami. First airing his views from a radio station which was subsequently closed down after a trial in a Swedish court, Rami has created a website that has been translated into over 15 languages, in order to attack Judaism and Zionism for their "macabre global designs".

The similarities with "Mr Sparks'" email seem striking. Aside from the detailed, voluminous and often obscure lists of people like Alan Yentob, Michael Grade and Jenny Abramsky, the incorrectly labelled "Jew Rupert Murdoch" seems to add more evidence.

GIDEON MAILER,

London.

...You will be sent poll card nearer to the date with details of your polling station; if you want to know in advance what war you are in...

Electoral Registration & Elections Office, London Borough of Camden

Colemanballs

IN MEMORIAM

"We are witnessing the passing of the last eminent Victorian... something we won't see again for many decades."
JAMES FORLONG, Sky News
(Stuart Young)

"People are here, chatting and laughing – it's clearly a solemn occasion."
NICHOLAS WITCHELL, Radio 5
(Allan Friswell)

"I feel she will be remembered for her role during wartime. She stood alone against the mighty Nazi armies."
DAVID WINNICK MP, Walsall Advertiser
(Rosemary Pointon)

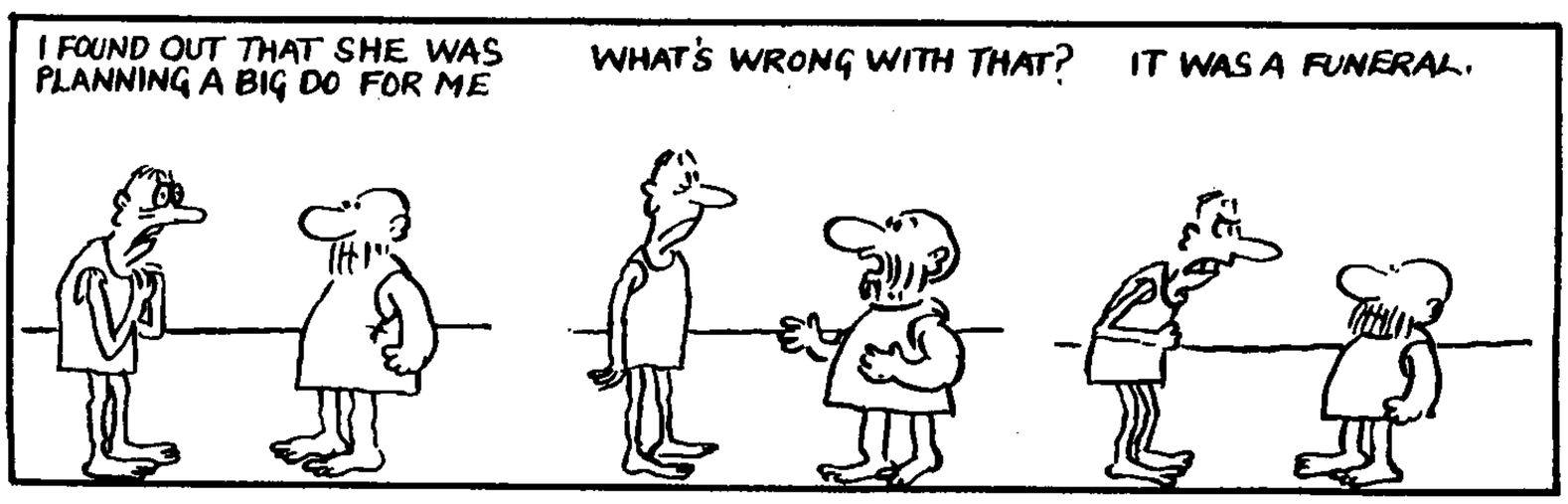
"It's a crystal clear day here except for that slight shimmering haze."
NICHOLAL WITCHELL, Radio 4

"There will now be a minute's silence for Queen Elizabeth the First – the Queen Mother..."
PA SYSTEM ANNOUNCEMENT, Southend Utd FC, shortly before kick-off, 1 April

"She was the most wonderful thing for jumping."
Ex-jockey LORD OAKSEY, ITN

HOM SAP

AUSTIN



Letter from **Italy**

from Our Own Correspondent

WHEN two million people take to the streets in a country as cynical as ours, it is time to take notice. Last month's demonstration in Rome was triggered by proposed changes to the employee-friendly Article 18. But it was also a protest against an increasingly unpalatable government, under the stewardship of Tony Blair's new best friend: our perma-tanned media magnate and all-round billionaire, Silvio Berlusconi.

Berlusconi was drawn into politics when many of his chums in the ruling right-wing coalition were disgraced in a 1994 judicial probe into corruption. His Forza Italia was slickly packaged by media professionals as a new "Third Way" between the discredited old right and an untried left that had on its agenda the dismantling of monopolies like those enjoyed so profitably by, er, Mr Berlusconi. But the party is less "Third Way" than "policy-free", leaving his coalition parties to drive the government's agenda.

On one side there is the fascist (sorry, "post" fascist) Alleanza Nazionale (AN), which is determined to strengthen the unity of our once-proud nation in the manner of the "greatest statesman who ever lived" — as the party's leader and our current vice president Gianfranco Fini described Mussolini in an eventually retracted statement.

On the other extreme there is the Lega Nord, which is determined to break our country into devolved regions, keeping its interest firmly in the mythical land of Padania (most of Northern Italy, a bit of Austria, and, to liven things up, a bit of former Yugoslavia too).

Neither has much support. The LN polled just 4 percent in elections last year, with the AN on 10 percent. But under Berlusconi, the Lega Nord is in charge of devolution and the justice and labour ministries. In addition to the vice-presidency, the Alleanza Nazionale holds the interior and communications portfolios. The AN has denounced the stream of jokes about the Lega Nord's deranged Umberto Bossi as "racist". This seems a bit rich when it was the Lega Nord that encouraged its members to wear, and identify themselves as, "green shirts". The Green Shirts have forcibly "escorted" journalists from public meetings and formed vigilante groups in the wake of any crime involving a foreigner.

The new "Fini-Bossi" laws, if passed, will make it possible to expel any non-European resident who is not currently in employment. With Article 18 under the axe, the prospect for our foreign workers becomes a nightmare: if the government gets its way, anyone who has been legally registered and working in Italy for the last five to ten years, paying full taxes, can be repatriated, penniless, at the drop of a hat.

As for those seeking asylum or work from abroad, Bossi has famously declared that "we should shoot them — that's what they do in America." It is in this climate that more than 50 would-be immigrants drowned in the Mediterranean recently, having had the misfortune to be "saved" by our navy.

The last few weeks have seen demonstrations across the country demanding, among other things, a resolution of the conflict of interest between Mr Berlusconi's political role and his commercial holdings. This intense debate has at least been resolved, with the government simply changing the law to far served only to give him a bigger stage to perform on, which, like your Mr Blair, he clearly relishes, leaving his coalition partners to dictate policy back home. As our Nobel Prize winner Dario Fo fumed recently: "No one in the history of Italy has ever held the posts of president and foreign minister at the same time... oh, I was forgetting Mussolini.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

"I'm very sorry for what I've done, because I realise now that it was a big mistake," Robert Alan Woods told Judge Jonathan Apagar in Roanoke, Virginia, "and I have to admit that I have a problem which I cannot control. I derive sexual pleasure from dressing and acting like a baby, and there ain't nothing wrong in that, but I now understand that I shouldn't act out my desires in other people's houses without their permission."

Earlier, Tammy Garrett had told the court about the incident that had led to the prosecution. "I returned home after my day's work, and went to my bedroom to change. When I opened the door, I found my neighbour, Mr Woods, in my bed, naked except for a diaper and a Tweety Bird bib. He had a baby's bottle and a container of baby food next to him on the nightstand, and asked me to feed him, but I refused. Then he told me he'd 'done dirty' in his diaper, and asked me to change him. At that point, I began shouting at him, and he screamed out, crying at the top of his voice. Then he suddenly jumped out of bed and apologised, and offered to pay for the cleaning. After that, he climbed out through the window he'd broken to get in, and that's when I decided to call the police."

Thirty-year-old Woods, who had also been caught wearing diapers while breaking into closed day care centres in Roanoke and Salem, faces five years in prison. But sentence was adjourned, pending a psychological evaluation. *(Washington Times, 28/2/2002. Spotter: Kenneth Skilling)*

— o —

"Mrs C, a 77 year old lady, was admitted to the Royal United Hospital Bath on 26 September after an unusual sequence of events. Earlier that day, she had been parking her automatic car, but when she stopped and got out to open her garage door she unfortunately failed to engage the handbrake. While she was opening the door, her car eased forward to knock her down and then roll over her right shoulder, trapping her underneath her vehicle. She cried out for help, and a friendly neighbour (Mrs Y) out walking with her 7 year old daughter (Miss Y) rushed to her aid. Mrs Y (not holding a UK driving licence) reluctantly got into the car and, with Mrs C's advice, engaged reverse, freeing Mrs C but unfortunately driving into her daughter and knocking her down. Hearing her daughter's cries, she drove forward, crashing the car into a wall.

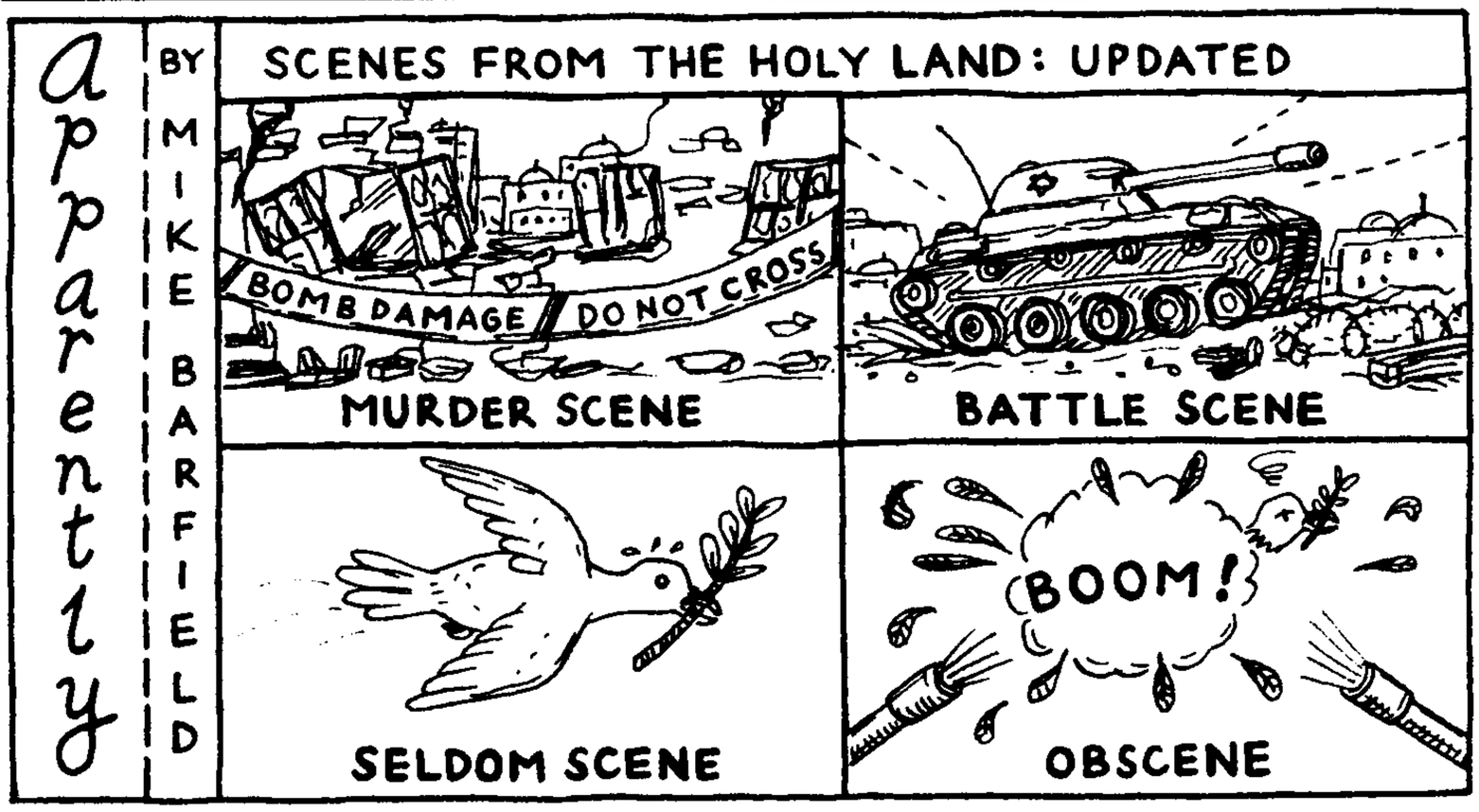
"All three were admitted to the accident and emergency department." (British Medical Journal, 9/3/2002. Spotter: S.C.J. Palmer)

— o —

"It's true that we failed to predict the recent Istanbul earthquake," Professor Zaman of the Heybeliada early warning station in Turkey admitted to reporters, "but there was a very good reason for that. The early warning system was not functioning because, as a cost-saving measure, we had disconnected the telephone lines that connect our nine testing stations to our central computer."

Following an outcry over the station's failure to warn of the earthquake (which measured 4.8 on the Richter scale and caused millions of pounds' worth of damage), Project Coordinator Dr Berk Ustundag tried to explain their dilemma. "We know that our earthquake

early warning system is important for the lives of millions of Turkish people, but we only receive a small amount of government funding. We were worried that the phone bills for the nine testing stations would be too high, because the system operates over the Internet, so we decided to save money by switching the monitors off at the end of each working day. The advantage of this procedure is that our project stays within budget. The disadvantage is that we cannot predict impending earthquakes if they start to happen between 6pm and 9am. Or at weekends." *(Turkish Daily News, 4/3/2002. Spotter: John Grannells)*



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo,

As a mark of respect, I am leaving the first paragraph of this newsletter blank

Now that during that blank space we have all had a chance to think about the real meaning of the Queen Mother's life, what did she stand for?

Not for stuffy old rituals and outmoded ceremonies, that's for sure!

No one played a more pivotal role than she did in bringing the monarchy up to date and into the 21st Century.

More than any other member of the Royal Family, she stood for change (from the Greek 'changos' meaning 'staying the same').

She was in the best sense a moderniser – someone who wanted to move things forward, to get away from the old "them and us" mentality, and to wed the whole nation together into one happy community.

Isn't that what she tried to do when she went down to the Docklands during the war, and made her famous speech (Ich bin eine Eastender" (could you check that one please, Alastair?).

And isn't that what some of us are trying to do today?

I have been very moved in recent days by the number of parishioners who have come up to me to say "we're so sorry she's dead, vicar, but thank Heavens we've still got you to carry on her good work, with your radiant smile and your friendly wave. God bless you, sir – we hope you will live until you are 102"!

I feel very humble when I hear such sentiments expressed, because it make me realise that I am just me in a long line of popular public figures who have given their all in the service of the community!

Yours

Tony

The vicar has been out in the parish. Preaching "The Good Nukes"! (As seen by local artist Mr. De la Nougerede)

The Flight into Egypt 2002-style

Cherie and I would like to put on record our thanks to all those who made it possible for us to take our recent pre-Easter break in Egypt. As you all know, Cherie and I have something of a struggle to survive on a vicar's stipend (even with a working wife!) and there are Ewan's university fees coming up, not to mention clothes and shoes for little Leo! So we were particularly grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Mubarak for arranging our flight and hotel, which we could never have afforded otherwise, although we did of course donate a similar amount to charity when we got found out (surely 'home'? A.C.). If anyone would like to see the video of us scuba diving in the Red Sea and going on a camel ride round the Pyramids, they can be purchased from the Vicarage at just £28.99 (all proceeds to go to the Vicar's Egyptian Holiday Charity Fund).

A WARNING FROM MS CHERIE BOOTH QC

The vicar's wife would like to make it clear that if there is any more malicious tittle tattle in the parish about her using the vicarage for commercial purposes in contravention of the Bar Council's Code of Professional conduct, those responsible will be prosecuted for breaching Article 23.2 of the European Charter of Human Rights concerned with "The Need to Protect the Privacy of Very Important People".

WINETASTING

Mr. Lairg of our local solicitors Lairg and Co. is holding a vintage wine-tasting at his offices all next week, between the hours of 9am and 11pm. All welcome. Bring own bottle!

Parish Postbag

Dear Vicar,

If you publish any more cosy messages from your fundamentalist friend the Rev. Dubya Bush, I for one will be forced to

Yours sincerely

Peter Kilfoyle (and 129 others)

The Editor reserves the right to cut any letters on the grounds of pathetic naïveté and reminds all the signatories of the above letter that he knows where they live.

Following our recent visit with the Rev. Dubya Bush of the Church of the Seventh Day Morons at his lovely home in Texas, America, Cherie and I were delighted to have this message from our kind host:

Dear Fellow-Crusader in the Holy War Against the Evil One Laura an' I were mighty pleased to have you and your good lady Cheryl drop by at the ranch to join us in a little old-fashioned Texan hospitality. We really did have a wild time, didn't we, as we worked out how we two buddies could join hands in ridding the world of Mr. Satan Hussein and those ungodly weapons of mass destruction which he has been hiding away like some pesky racoon putting his nuts in the hide of a dead buffalo. Yessir, that Great Day of Judgement is a-comin! It's not far off now, and when the trumpet sounds and the saints go marchin' in I can tell you that we two chosen ones will be right there, shoulder to shoulder, kicking the ass of the Evil One!

Glory Glory Hallelujah!
Yours in the Lord
Dubya
The Great Moron Tabernacle,
Somewhere in Texas

To Remember In Your Prayers

Spare a thought for poor Mrs Mowlam who is still very bitter about her dismissal from the PCC. She is going round the parish telling everyone that the vicar and his friends spread stories that she was mentally ill and incapable of doing her job. This is, of course, quite untrue and just another sad example of how mad Mrs Mowlam is and proof, if it were needed, that she was always unfit to hold down a post in the PCC. T.B.

Pret-a-Manger Square – Loaves and fishes to take away
Sorry – Closed

Bethlehem Star

AD1

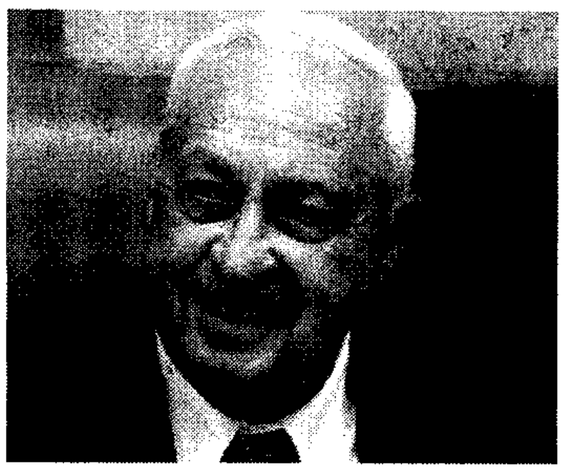
HEROD DENIES MASSACRE OF INNOCENTS

by Jenin di Giovanni

KING ARIEL Herod, the Holy Land's Mr Big, today issued a categorical denial that there had been a massacre of hundreds of innocent children in and around the Bethlehem area.

Said Herod, 76, "We have been carrying out a defensive action codenamed 'Operation Slaughter', in order to stabilise the situation in Bethlehem."

He continued, "Troublemakers have been using a number of firstborn as human shields, making it sadly necessary for our forces to destroy the entire juvenile population of the time."



Herod: "I deeply regret any unfortunate civilian casualties"

Reporters from the Bible have been banned, "purely for their own safety," according to the head of Operation Slaughter.

Meanwhile, the so-called Three Wise Men who were on a peace mission to the region have called off their proposed meeting with Herod due to a last-minute dream.

● *Your camel trains tonight* **7**

GLENDA SLAGG

THE GAL YOU WANT TO SHAG!!!
(Surely Not? Ed.)

■ HATS OFF to Nigella Lawson – the glamorous TV cook who is not ashamed to show off what she's REAR-ly made of!!?! Geddit???!? She's pure CL-ASS!!!? Geddit??!? Which one of us gals wouldn't die for a beautiful B-U-M like Nigella's!!?!? That's the Bottom Line Mister!!?! (Geddit??????!)

■ NIGELLA LAWSON – arencha-sickofher???! If she's not on the telly a-gobblin' and a-wobblin', there she is paradin' her bum like a tart – and I don't mean one she made earlier!!?! Geddit??!?! Take a tip from Glenda, Nigella love – if I had a rear end the size of yours, I'd park it in an aeroplane hangar and call it a day!!?! No offence!!!?

Byeeee!!!

In Today's Telavivagraph

● Barbara Amiel Sharon on 'Why the Palestinians should be driven into the sea'.

● Unfunny cartoon by Hack to illustrate piece by the proprietor's wife.

© *Daily Telavivagraph*

A Taxi Driver writes

Every week a well-known Professor of Poetry is asked to make a fool of himself on an issue of topical importance.

THIS WEEK: **Tom Paulin** (Cab No. 666) on the crisis in the Middle East.

...Do you know who I blame guv for all that out there? Them bloody Jews – you know the American ones – blimey! What a load of Nazis!!! Tell you what I'd do with the Yankee Yids – I'd string 'em up. It's the only language they understand. I mean, people go on about Hitler but he had a point, didn't he – I mean, if there weren't all those Jews out in Israel then there wouldn't be no trouble.

I had that David Irving in the back of the cab – a very clever man.

'Ere, do you want a signed book of my latest poems? No? You a Jew or what?

Next week: Melanie 'Daily Mel' Phillips (Cab No. 7842) – "Why Blair's latest idea is terrible, whatever it is".

Advertisement

EYE TRAVEL OFFER

Visit The Holy Land – And Follow In The Footsteps Of St Colin Of Powell

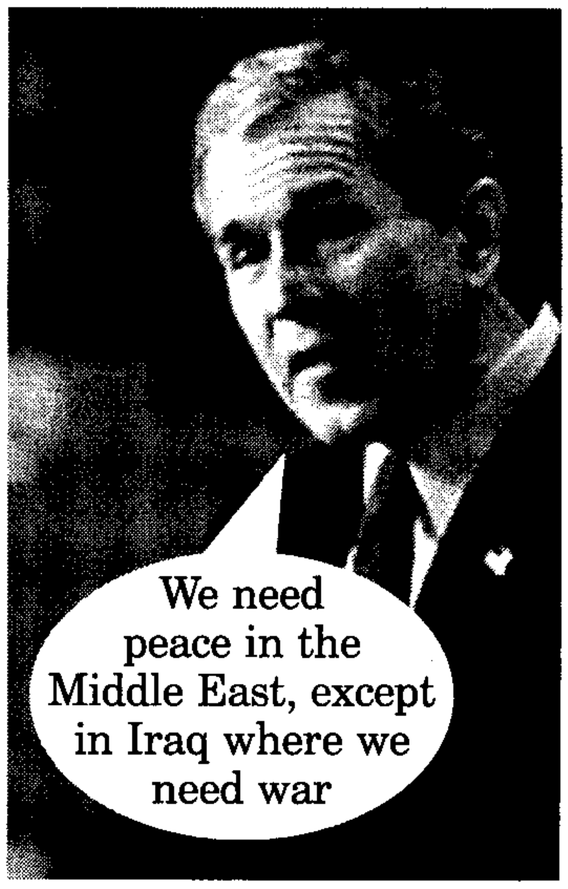
You too can have an exclusive 8-day tour of Israel with leisurely stops at every other country in the Middle East – ending up in Israel for a comprehensive 20 minutes before you fly home.

What you won't see in your Holy Land stopover:

- ***The Dead Sea***
- ***The Dead Palestinians***
- ***The Dead Peace Process***
- ***Historic Ruins Of Bethlehem (dating back to this morning)***

(That's enough of this piece. Ed.)

BLAIR SPELLS IT OUT



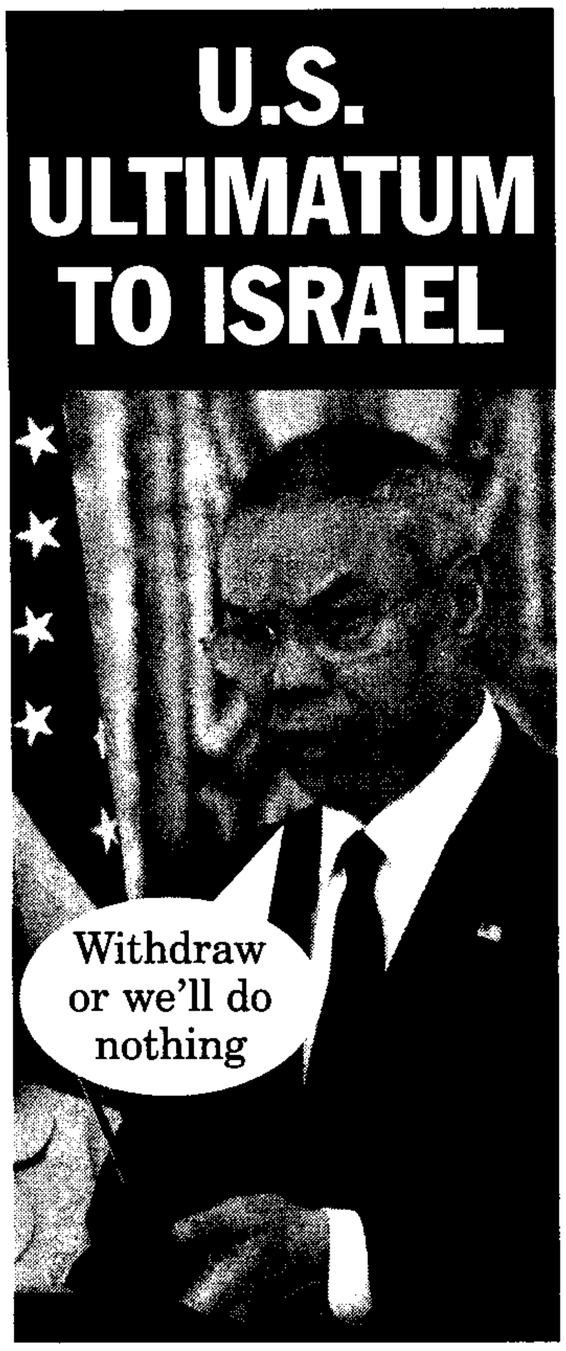
MAN INJURES FOOT SHOCK

SHOCKING news emerged last night, when it became clear that a man had injured his foot playing football.

A medical expert said: "It appears his foot was injured during a football match."

On other pages

- Pictures of Broken Foot
- Dr Thomas Stuttaford on What Happens When Millionaires Break Bones



A Doctor Writes

How vaccines work

WHAT happens is that the businessman injects a small amount of cash into the body politic or *Corpus blairus nulaborensis*, to give it the full medical title.

In a very short time the businessman is covered in a huge rash of money which will ensure that his bank balance remains healthy for years (or as long as he remembers to "top up" his injections).

There are, however, occasional side effects, including the possibility of outbreaks of unwelcome publicity *(Sleazus tabloidus exposensis)*. But there is no cause for alarm and after a few days the symptoms will disappear.

If you are worried about your business, give Tony Blair some money.

© A Doctor.

Births

TO ELIZABETH HURLEY, a million pound baby boy, Damian. Mother and cheque are well and Damian is said to have his mother's eyes and his father's money. Flowers should be sent c/o Elton John.

Those Hurley Names In Full

At last Private Eye can reveal the complete shortlist of names that Liz drew up before selecting Damian.

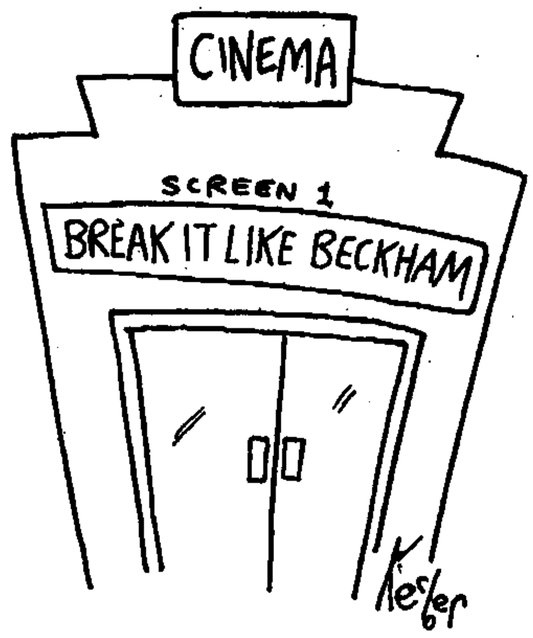
666
Dracula
Frankenstein
Beelzebub
Salem
Adolf
Judas
Peregrine Worsthorne

Deaths

ITV Digital has died, and thousands upon thousands of over-paid footballers filed past its body to pay their respects.

"I can think of forty thousand reasons I should be here, and that's just my weekly pay-packet," said one teary-eyed premier league striker. "With ITV Digital dead, we may never see the likes of that pay packet ever again".

ITV Digital is to be buried in a private funeral service by Carlton and Granada bosses in a grave alongside BSB Broadcasting and Kirsh Media.



ME AND MY SPOON

THIS WEEK

NO. 94
SIR JOHN MORTIMER

What is your first memory of a spoon?

My father, who was a barrister, was totally blind so I used to have to guide his spoon into the top of his boiled egg. And he used to recite great chunks of Shakespeare to me as I helped him with his soldiers.

In your career at the bar, did you encounter many cases involving spoons?

Oh yes. There was a very famous case in which I defended a man charged with stealing a Georgian silver spoon from Aspreys. The judge was old Mr Justice Malallieu who fell asleep during my summing up. When he woke up, he sentenced my client to death. It was very funny.

In your other career as a novelist and playwright do spoons loom large?

They do indeed. I was on the set of the television series I had written, "Spoon QC" based on my father, when Johnny Gielgud complained that "Spoon" was a silly name for a QC and could we call him "Fork" instead. In the end we compromised and the character was called "Rumpole".

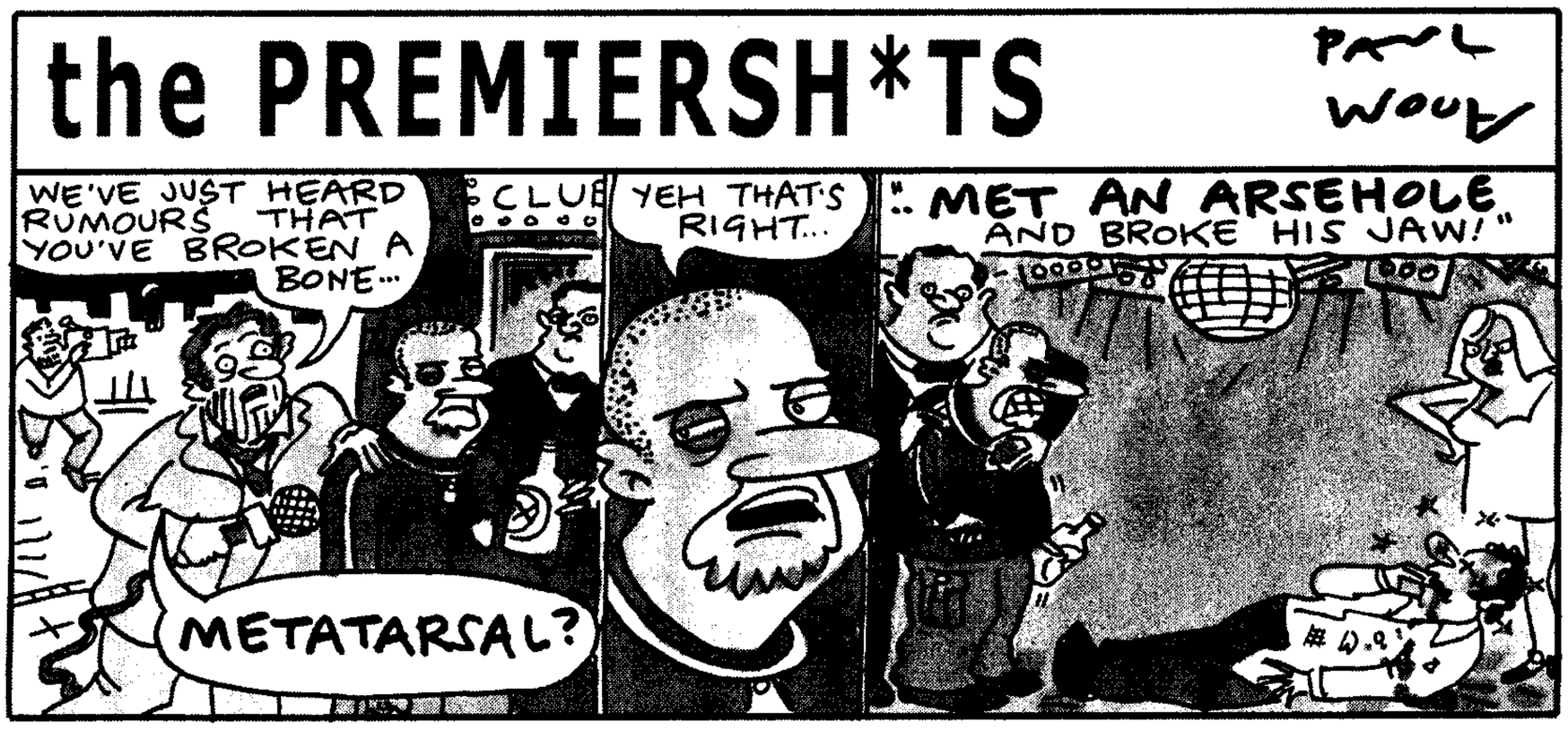
Have you got a favourite spoon?

I certainly do. It belonged to my father and it featured in one of the Rumpole episodes. I use it now to stir my breakfast glass of champagne. Talking of which, I am getting paid for this, aren't I? I think it's best if you talk to my agent. Shall we say £1800?

Has anything amusing ever happened to you involving a spoon?

Isn't Blair ghastly?

NEXT WEEK: Commander Paddick – *"Me and My Duvet"*.



JURY FINDS R.E.M. MAN 'FAMOUS'

by Our Celebrity Staff **Donna Alr Rage**

MR PETER BUCK, the guitarist with the popular singing group R.E.M. was yesterday found by a jury to be "Extremely Famous" and therefore not guilty of anything at all.

The court had been presented with conclusive evidence of Mr Buck's celebrity – including a testimonial from the legendary Irish expert witness Mr "Bono" Bono.

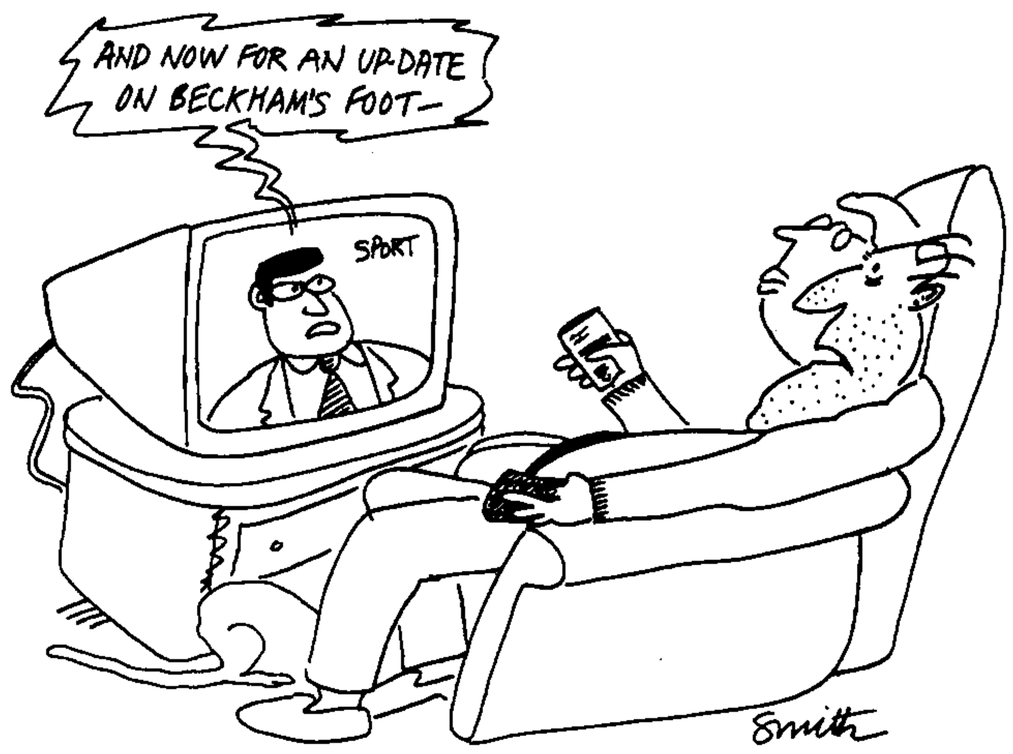
Despite a number of unfamous witnesses saying that Mr Buck was disgracefully drunk on red wine during a flight and had behaved appallingly towards the cabin crew, the jury were swayed by the revelation that Mr Buck had sold lots of records and had been on the telly.

The Buck Doesn't Stop Here

A relieved Mr Buck said, "I am delighted with this result. It proves once and for all that nobody is above the law unless they are famous."

Those R.E.M. Hits In Full

1. **The Drinks Trolley**
2. **The Stewardess**
3. **The Captain**



"The bastard's wearing a burgundy tie!"

N.U.T. STRIKE OVER TEACHER SHORTAGES

by our Education Staff **Polly Technic**

MR DAVID SPART, the Assistant Vice Chair of the National Union of Teaching Operatives (Lambeth Branch) last night confirmed that his members would be taking strike action over the coming weeks.

However he warned tha,t due to staff shortages, supply teachers would have to be brought in to go on strike.

Agitation, Agitation, Agitation

"There are not nearly enough trained teachers to cover all the picket lines," he said, "and it is a total tragedy that there are insufficient numbers of teachers to not teach our children."

AN APOLOGY

Mr Jon Snow And The Channel Four News Team

IN OUR broadcast just before the funeral ceremonies for the late Queen Mother, we may have given the impression that the monarchy was entirely washed up and no longer of any interest to the British public. Vox pop interviews like that with Miss Tanya Lymeswold outside the King's Lynn Waitrose, in which she said "no, they're irrelevant really, these days people are more interested in the Lottery and Big Brother", may have reinforced this impression. Mr Snow's concluding prediction that "the Queen's Mother's funeral will be the biggest switch-off in TV history" and will "undoubtedly mark the end of the monarchy as we know it" may have led viewers to believe that Channel Four regarded the death of the late Queen as a trivial and unimportant event to which we would be giving no further coverage.

We now realise that the Queen Mother was a towering historical figure whose death was possibly the most important event of the entire century, which has done more than anything to reinforce the natural loyalty of the British people to the monarchy. As Mrs Ludmilla Nargs so eloquently put it in one of our many special broadcasts on the Lying-in-State, "She was our history. She was everything that Britain stands for. I am totally gutted."

We apologise for any confusion which may have arisen from our earlier reports, and can only plead in mitigation that all the other channels were just as bad.

CANNABIS Café
HI! I'M JIM. I'M YOUR DEALER FOR TONIGHT
KEEP ON THE GRASS
WAITER! SOMEBODY HAS BOGARTED OUR ROACH!
PASSIVE SMOKING SAVES ME A FORTUNE
MORE LEBANESE BLACK VICAR?
HERE'S YOUR BILL... GIGGLE.... BOYS... GIGGLE.... WHO CARES.. GIGGLE.. ABOUT MONEY, MAN!.. CRAZY! NOBODY NEED PAY.. GIGGLE... DOWN WITH WAR.. GIGGLE.. CRAZY.....WOW...
BILL £10
OI!
MAKE LOVE NOT WAR
PEACE MAN
HEATH

SPECIAL QUEEN MOTHER CUT-OUT-'N'-THROW-AWAY 94-PAGE SOUVENIR SUPPLEMENT

AND STILL THEY COME

by our Royal Staff PHIL PAPER

IT IS nearly two weeks since the Queen Mother died yet hundreds and thousands of articles are still filing into the newspapers. Long and short, old and thin, the articles come in all shapes and sizes and stretch from the front page all the way to the crossword – but they all share the same emotion. Desperation.

Some pieces have appeared two or three times and yet they are still queuing up to be published again.

River Of Guff

There has been a huge tide of sadness engulfing the nation's journalists who feel that this is their last chance to sell a piece about the Queen Mother. "We shall not see the like of these pieces again," said one tearful journalist. "It's the end of an era. An era in which you could file any old rubbish about the Royal Family and it would go straight in."

Amongst those slowly moving their hands across the keyboard in silent tribute were such household names as John Mortimer, Melanie Phillips, A.N. Wilson, Hugo Young, Andrew Roberts, Ingrid Sewage and the late Bill Deedes.

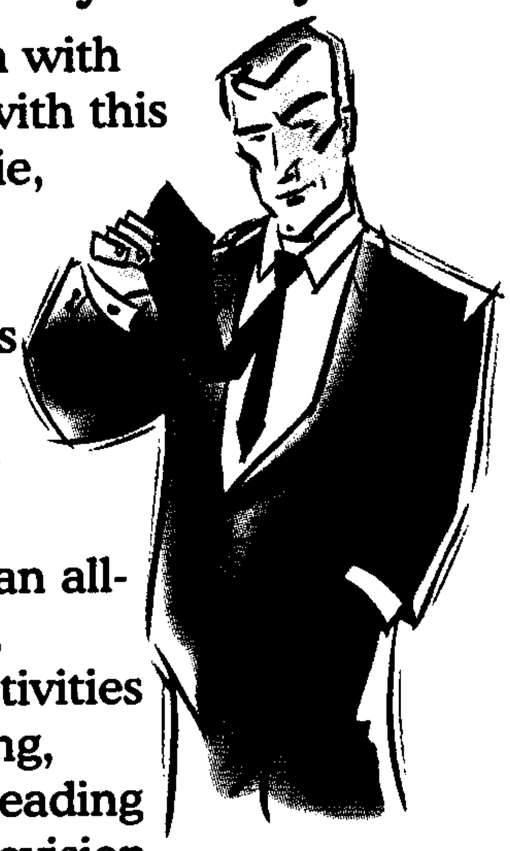
Only the stony-hearted could have failed to be moved to tears by the spectacle of these hacks churning out millions of words to *(cont. p.94)*

NEW-LOOK ROYAL FAMILY

Gnome Queen Mother Souvenir Offer

THE QUEEN MOTHER MEMORIAL REVERSIBLE TIE

DON'T get caught out (as some people have been!) by the unexpected death of a senior member of the Royal Family.



You need never be seen with inappropriate neckwear with this new silk-style reversible tie, made from 100 percent washable Naflon™, and designed by world-famous tie designer Jacques de Cou from L'Institute de la Cravate, Bruges.

On one side, the tie is an all-purpose burgundy colour, suitable for day-to-day activities such as a business meeting, lunching with clients or reading the 6 o'clock news on television.

On the other side, however, the tie is a respectful black, entirely suitable for showing instant respect at the death of a senior and much-loved member of the Royal Family.

Just imagine! No more Royal fury, or attacks in the Daily Mail for your "insult to the monarchy", with the "Queen Mum Reversible Neckpiece".

Send £375.55 now to Gnome Offers, PO Box 934, Yeovil Trading Estate TA3 4PO.

Says P.S., "I wish I'd had the Gnome Reversible Tie. It would have saved me a lot of trouble!"

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH Friday, April 19, 2002

The Daily Telegraph

A Special Editorial by Sir Charles Moore O.E., Editor of the Daily Telegraph

If there is one message which has come out loud and clear from the momentous events which have attended the obsequies? of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, it is that the whole nation is united in contempt for Mr Blair and his New Labour government. As I left the Abbey after that incomparably moving funeral service, on every side there was only one topic of conversation. Why had the Prime Minister not worn proper morning dress for the occasion, unlike Mr Iain Duncan Smith or indeed myself? Mr Blair is, of course, a busy man. But surely the very least he could have done was to put aside half-an-hour to pay a visit to Moss Bros, or perhaps borrow some proper clothes from an Old Etonian friend.

As for the Prime Minister's wife, the less said about her the better. With her frightful hat and ghastly dress, swinging her handbag in an inappropriately jaunty manner, she looked exactly like one of those awful model-girls we have on almost every page of the Telegraph these days.

But at least for one thing we can all be truly grateful. We did not have to endure the spectacle of Mr Blair reading the lesson, as we did five years ago at the funeral of the late Diana, Princess of Wales.

Nor was any of that dreadful caterwauling from that man in a wig.

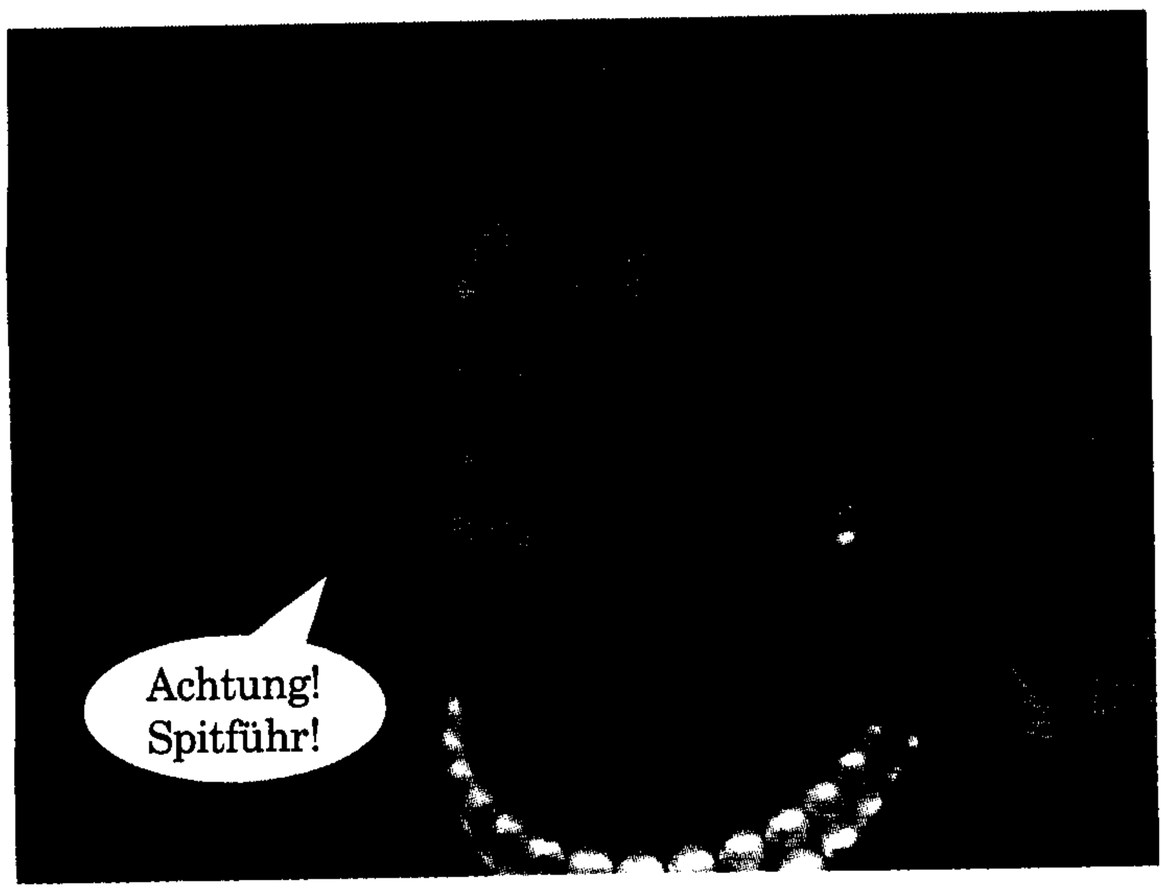
No. On all sides the congregation were agreed. New Labour is finished. As the Archbishop of Canterbury so eloquently put it in his excellent sermon, speaking for the entire nation, "Strength, dignity and laughter. Iain Duncan Smith has them all. Vote Conservative."

© *The Daily Tailorgraph and Morning Dress.*

By popular request, the Daily Telegraph is reprinting what was universally agreed to be the highlight of the Funeral Service, the recitation of the styles and titles of the late Queen Mother by the Garter King-At-Arms, Major General Sir Roderick Voletrouser G.C.S.E.

"Her Imperial and Serene Majesty the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, Dowager Empress of the Seven Seas, Dame Knight Cross of the Most Royal Order of the Thistle, Most Noble Lady of the Order of the Hot Cross Bun, Dame Commander of the Most High Order of the Imperial Leather, Most Puissante Relict of the Grand Wizard of the Raspberry, Colonel-in-Chief of the Queen's Own Highland Terriers, the Irish Boozaliers and 437 other regiments, Grand Mistress of the Worshipful Company of Tipplers and Distillers *(cont. pp 94-106)*

BATTLE OF BRITAIN MEMORIAL FLIGHT SURPRISES PRINCESS MICHAEL



Forget This

An Elegy On The Death Of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother

So farewell then.
I have just heard on the radio
that she is dead.
It was something we had all expected
for some time. But when the news
came
it was still
something of a shock.
It is the end of an era,
an appointment with history,
a day we shall never forget.

The horse is galloping to the winning post,
the salmon is swimming up river,
the pigeon is purring by
the fireside.
And the trees, popping into bud,
have no idea
that something so important
has happened.
They just get on with their annual
task of producing leaves.
just like I am producing this poem,
a leaf of history for
all the nation to read
and think about
in a real sense.

You spanned the century
like a great bridge
spanning a mighty river
where the salmon gallop
and the horses purr
and the pigeons leap
for joy and sorrow.

Glamis, Sandringham, Balmoral.
These were the names of places
that knew you better
than I ever did,
although I did see you sometimes
on the television.

Keith's Mum has said
I must not forget to mention the Blitz,
in which you played such
a crucial role.

But back to the salmon
and the purring horses
and those galloping pigeons.
Yes, nature is a wonderful thing
and in the end
we must not
forget this.

We must remember this,
a kiss is just a kiss,
a sigh is just a sigh.
At the going down of the sun
we will remember
You.
(Will this do?)

E.J. Motion, The Poet Laureate

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH Friday, April 19, 2002

Letters to the Editor

The Queen Mother

SIR – Surely those who were responsible for the magnificent, split-second organisation of the Royal Funeral should be appointed to run Railtrack without delay (and perhaps air traffic control into the bargain!).
NRP Ghastly
Haywards Heath

SIR – I once had the great honour to meet Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, when she graciously attended the opening of the Monmouth Moth Museum in 1974. Her Majesty showed the greatest possible interest in all the moths on display (7) and joked that she hoped they would not eat her hat. Truly we shall not see her like again.
Rhodri Rees-Bore
Monmouth

SIR – The British people have once again shown their contempt for the Guardian-eating, muesli-wearing chattering classes who sneeringly forecast that no one would bother to turn up for the Queen Mother's Funeral.
So much for 'Cool Britannia'!
Yours sincerely
R.D. Smythe-Smythe
(Col. Retired)
Weymouth

SIR – If they are looking for a new Queen Mother, there can surely be only one candidate – Sir Elton John.
Mike Giggler
Via e-mail

The Guardian Friday 19 April 2002

Letters

The Queen Mother

Have I been on another planet, or has something important happened? An old lady has died aged 101. Hundreds of them do every day, but I don't notice the Guardian putting them on the front page. Can we have a sense of proportion please?
Keith Stiggles
Hackney

● It is sickening that, at a time when the world is teetering on the brink of a nuclear holocaust started by the Fascist Bush and his poodle Blair, that the media should be literally inundated with sickening drivel about some outdated relic of the parasitic feudal class, i.e. the so-called Queen Mother, a known sympathiser with Hitler in 1940 and, er...
Yours faithfully
The Hon. Rupert Twistleton-Spart
Ascot

● The cost of the funeral of the Queen Mother has been reliably estimated by the New Spartsman at £6.3 billion. This would be enough to build 823 new hospitals or 378 schools, or to provide 24-hour child care for every working woman in the whole country. Need I say more?
Mrs Ludmilla Rusbridger
Chorleywood

● Who is now to replace the Queen Mother in the nation's affections? I would suggest Sir Elton John.
Mike Giggler
Via e-mail

TOP ROYALS FLY IN TO PAY LAST RESPECTS

By Our Royal Staff Phillipa Page

HUNDREDS of the world's top Royals flew in yesterday to pay their last respects to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

Not since the funeral of Queen Victoria in 1901 had so many of the world's top Royals flown in to pay their last respects to the woman they called simply Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

Who were they, these top Royals who flew in to pay their last respects to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother?

Private Eye is proud to present this unique cut-out-and-keep guide to the top Royals who flew in to pay their last respects to the Queen Mother.

Princess Vanilla of Haagen-Dazs

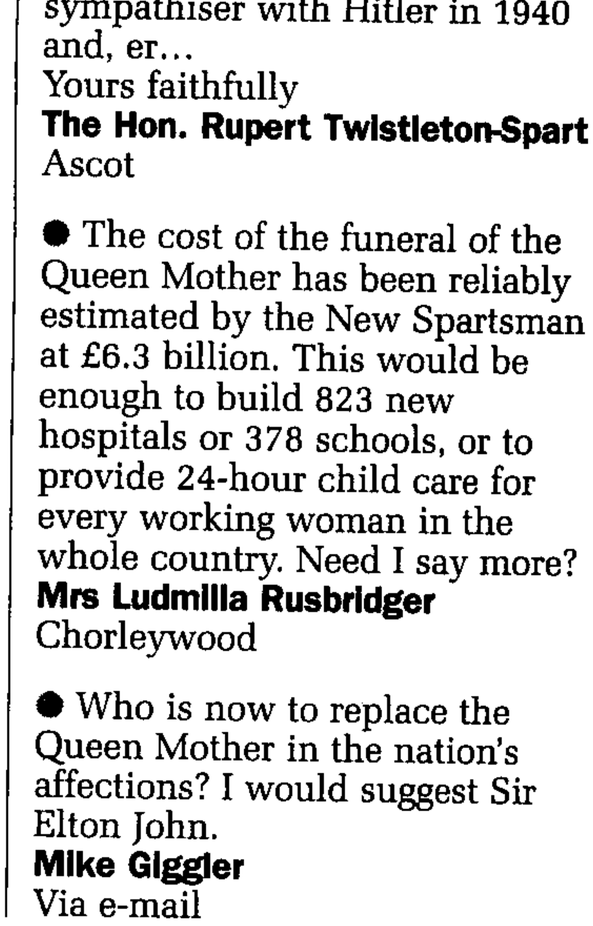
Ex-King Boris of Johnson and Queen Petronella of Wyfrontia

The Tandoori of Hinduja

His Highness the Count Oranjeboom of Holsten-Pils

His Royal Highness the Archduke Heineken of Carlsberg

Her Royal Highness the Queen Camilla of Uganda
(Surely some mistake? Ed.)



"She was the Queen of Hats..."

DO YOUR OWN DIMBLEBY ROYAL COVERAGE

1. Insert the adjective "beloved" in front of all proper nouns, as in the passage:

"And so she returns to her beloved Windsor and her beloved Castle looking resplendent under her beloved blue sky, as her beloved coffin moves etc, etc.

2. ... er...

3. ...that's it.

In Memoriam

TONY PARSONS, Daily Mirror

Why is it the old who always die first?

First top soccer commentator Kenneth Wolstenholme.

Then Spike Milligan.

And now the Queen Mum.

Evil monster Adolf Hitler once called her his most deadly foe.

And this was a man who knew a thing or two about deadly foes.

Adolf reckoned that if ever it came down to a showdown between the two of 'em in a dark alleyway, The Queen Mum would have him in an armlock and be jabbing out his eyes with a well-sharpened pencil before he could gurgle, "Achtung! Schweinhund!"

She was a lady with bottle.

When everyone else deserted London, she was the one who stayed, catching those doodle-bugs in her arms and single-handedly flinging them back at the Hun.

That took guts. That took nerve.

That took bottle.

In the middle of the Blitz, she'd be down the East End every night with her Ack-Ack gun, giving Jerry all she'd got.

And never a hair out of place.

They say the best die young. Agreed. And the old die young. True.

But in her case the old died old. And that's best.

W.F. DEEDES, Daily Telegraph

It is, in a very real way, the end of an era. Yesterday has gone. Tomorrow, it will be a full two days away. And who knows what the day after will bring? There are seven days in a week, and four weeks in a month, give or take the odd day. Plus ca change.

As we bid this gracious lady adieu, those of us of "a certain age" will recall that she was not always the Queen Mother.

Far from it. Few remember it now, but she was once the Queen, married to King George VI. When her beloved Berite died, their eldest daughter, Elizabeth, ascended to the throne. Plus ca change.

What would it have been like if Princess Margaret had been the elder?

And what if King George VI had died ten years earlier, leaving the throne open for Queen Margaret? Would we have still won the war? It's easy to forget, but in those far-off days, the fate of this nation hung by a thread. Who knows? Herr Hitler might have considered a Britain reigned over by Queen Margaret – for all her undoubted qualities as a pianist – easy pickings.

We can only speculate. As it is, the Queen Mother lived to a great old age. In her famous hats and coats, always ready with a wave and a smile, she became a very well-known face. Few people, I think, realise quite how fond she was of horse-racing. On the other hand, some say she never got on particularly well with the Duchess of Windsor. Well, these things sometimes happen, even in the best of families. Plus ca change.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS, Guardian

Wasn't she marvellous? Well, no, actually, since you ask, she wasn't marvellous at all. In fact, her death marks the end of an anti-democratic era of deference and armchair fascism.

She was billed as the Last Empress of India, but when she kicked off her purpose-built shoes she was only 3 foot 11 inches high. Yet this didn't stop this card-carrying dwarf having the hots for Oswald Mosley, and strutting round the East End arm in arm with the old monster screaming anti-semitic abuse through a haze of pink gin.

That's something they don't tell us in the history books. And for some reason they also forget to mention her role in the notorious Watergate break-in, taking orders direct from Howard Hunt. And there are still many questions to be answered about exactly what part she played in the Irish

Potato Famine, and just how she came to be in Scotland when Pan Am Flight 103 crashed at Lockerbie.

In her private life, she was rarely seen without a fag and a bottle, and spent her rat-arsed days propping up the bar, spouting exaggerated opinions on topics of which she knew very little and cared even less.

Drunk, pampered, carefree, louche, burp, I feel a bit queasy actually. Who are you calling louche, you arsehole? Come outside and say that. Whoops, now you've made me spill it all down my trousers.

PETER HITCHENS, Mail on Sunday

Frankly, she is better off out of it. The Queen Mother was born in a great nation confident enough of its fine traditions and rich heritage to teach children the difference between right and wrong by whipping them until they bled. A proud, Victorian nation decent enought to eschew such modern atrocities as the "electricated lawn mower" and the "bean bag".

But what sort of nation has she left behind?

A nation in which women are forced to go to work, willy-nilly.

A nation in which "television" is available at the push of a button.

A nation in which a walk in the countryside can leave one with damp hair and muddy shoes.

A nation in which it is fashionable to pillory decent old-fashioned virtues like penny-pinching, self-loathing and mutual suspicion.

On the day the Queen Mother died, I happened to be walking down the street.

There wasn't a sedan chair to be seen. And – regardless of its proven deterrent effect on young offenders – not a single public execution was on offer.

Instead, motor-cars were going back and forth, forcing people to travel unheard-of distances.

Government-run ambulances were carrying innocent people – many of them strapped to their seats – to their deathbeds. I may even have spotted one driver chewing "gum".

And shops were openly displaying all sorts of unnecessary modern "gadgets" and "household goods". In one window I even saw an electric kettle.

Where were the colourful cut-purses and cheery prostitutes and rapscallions of yesteryear?

Nowhere to be seen.

This is a sorry country she leaves behind. A country in which unpleasant groups like the Swinging Blue Jeans and Freddie and the Dreamers holler their obscene songs to lipstick-wearing "Teen-Agers" in darkened clubs where light ale, bubble-gum and Disprin pills are freely passed around.

Let us hang our heads in shame, and say with one voice: "Beg pardon, Ma'am: we, your subjects, have let you down."

As told to

CRAIG BROWN

THESE NEW FLAT SCREEN PLASMA TVs ARE FANTASTIC, BARRY. I'VE HAD ONE PUT IN EACH BEDROOM IN THE HOUSE.
WITH THIS PLASMA TECHNOLOGY THE PICTURE QUALITY IS OUT OF THIS WORLD...
AND THE SOUND IT PRODUCES IS LIKE NOTHING YOU'VE EVER HEARD, MATE.
YEAH?
LISTEN. IT MAKES A TOTALLY DIFFERENT NOISE WHEN IT HITS THE GROUND..
REALLY? CAN I HAVE A GO?

Literary Review

Green with ennui

How to be a Gardener
Alan Titchmarsh
(BBC, £18.99)

"Many plants that live where there's lots of competition have learned to spread fast and swamp their neighbours. That explains the success of weeds, such as greater bindweed and couch grass."

Not to mention, one might add, *Horticulturus Televisiensis* "Alan", a highly invasive growth which has taken over most of the nation's gardening programmes, choking off the competition and swamping all but the hardiest rivals. Its adaptable habit enables it to flourish in garden centres, supermarkets, bookshops and libraries, and to grow in such disparate media as newspapers, magazines, radio and online. Last week it was to be seen topping the *Observer*'s hardback bestsellers' list, and at number two in the *Sindy*. It occupies not just its own website but has spread to others, such as crocus.com, to whose customers it sends out tendrils of spam or unsolicited emails.

It even has a brand name, under which are sold exactly the kind of "fancy" garden products its originator usually disparages. And now, with the onset of spring, we find it spreading once more, not just on TV but in the lavishly illustrated book of the new series.

Subtitled "Back to Basics", this glossy tome claims to be an exploration of the "hows" and "whys" of gardening and is intended, according to the blurb, to "give the novice confidence". Quite who these novices are is unclear. If they exist they must be very unconfident, or dim, or green (but not green fingered) if they need to be told that plants have roots and stems and leaves and live in stuff called soil and need water and sunlight to grow.

Anyone who has ever watched Alan doing an instant garden muck-over with Charlie and Tommy on *Ground Force*, or dispensing more genteel advice with Chris and Rachel, Pippa, Jo and the others who occasionally get a look-in on *Gardeners' World*, will know these things already. But then, you'd think anyone watching Delia Smith's recent cookery series would already know how to make a cup of coffee, yet there she was, on TV, patiently explaining how to do it. In short, our Alan has "done a Delia".

Thus, where Delia takes us through the Lakeland catalogue,

explaining the use of the roasting tray (for roasting things, actually) and omelette pan (for making omelettes), Alan takes us round his shed and tells us the difference between a spade and a fork, a hoe and a rake, before observing that: "A watering can is very handy for watering containers on the patio." However: "If you have a big garden then it's worth getting a hosepipe."

By now we are on page 44. Ten pages later our timorous novice finally gets to do some digging. A double spread of how and why plus three pictures of your man actually doing it. Curiously, the one piece of useful guidance for first-time diggers — how to stand so as not to bugger your back — is missing. Get this wrong and you'll disable yourself for the season.

But never mind if you do, you can always read the book. Or one of the other 30 or so books on gardening that Titchmarsh has previously written. Or indeed one of his four "bestselling novels", the latest of which, an Aga-saga called *Only Dad*, finds Alan "doing a Joanna".

If there's one theme that emerges from Alan's philosophy of gardening, it's that of thrift. Recycle your waste material, for example. A writer with 30-odd books to his name, largely on the same subject, can certainly offer a few tips on that. Give your older ideas a new lease of life with some intelligent pruning and reshaping. Lift and divide those clumps of prose. Pot up your summaries or show them off in a box at the side of the page.

After the somewhat pedestrian introduction, we move on to sowing seeds, buying plants, designing borders and so forth. There are chapters on weeds, pests and general maintenance. There is an entire section on lawns. And this is just Book One. A threatened second volume will take things further.

Each topic is covered in the sort of depth which no TV programme could hope to match, of course. But it is quite easily matched by any number of similarly accessible books, many rather shorter and a good deal cheaper.

As with cookery books, the colour plates are mouthwatering but for our fumbling novice probably also intimidating: "I could never do that" being their likeliest reaction. And as with cooking, no amount of reading will build up confidence nearly as effectively as actually doing a bit of gardening.

If you still want a massive reference book with lots of illustrations (which also, incidentally, tells you how to stand when digging), you'd be better off with the single-volume RHS Encyclopaedia of Gardening.

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

■ *SUN* columnist Richard Little john's "roller-coaster" novel about an ex-copper arrested for defending himself against an attacker in his own home has taken the big dipper to the bargain bin. *To Hell in a Handcart*, published by Harper Collins, cover price £5.99, is on sale at WH Smith in Glasgow for just £1.49. Queues are already not forming.

Just Larkin' about?

Trouble at Willow Gables and other fictions
Philip Larkin
(Faber, £20)

SEVENTEEN years dead now, Philip Larkin continues to inspire a lavish posthumous cult. Or perhaps we should make that "publishing schedule". A trawl through the catalogues rapidly establishes that since the late 1980s Faber has issued a good million words or so of Larkinalia: a *Collected Poems*, edited by Anthony Thwaite; a *Selected Letters* (ditto); a lengthy biography by the current poet laureate; collections of musings on jazz and old book reviews not previously assembled in 1983's pre-demise *Required Writing*. Not bad going, in fact, for a famously unproductive creative talent which in his lifetime managed a slim volume of verse once every decade.

Trouble at Willow Gables, the latest instalment in this stack of literary leavings, is quite the most extraordinary by a long stretch. In the early 1940s, filling in time before he sat his Oxford finals, and trading under the gigglesome soubriquet of "Brunette Coleman", it turns out that Larkin amused himself and one or two of his college chums by writing a couple of lengthy imitations of the girls' school stories made popular in the inter-war years by writers such as Angela Brazil and Dorita Fairlie Bruce.

Anyone familiar with the legendary paragraphs of male braggadocio exchanged by Larkin and his fast friend Kingsley Amis (whose shadow hangs irremovably over the present exercise) will have a fair idea of what to expect from the adventures of Marie Moore and her gorgeous accomplice Myfanwy, and sure enough the title story is rife with pert breasts straining against the fabric of over-tight gym slips, guileless double entendres (playing cricket proud Margaret Tattenham does just fine until "a full toss that caught her on the thigh unsettled her") hugs between the sheets and mild bits of flagellation. Phil, it appears, was very keen on the idea of teenage girls flicking each other with the end of a leather belt.

And yet the curious thing is that all this — *Trouble at Willow Gables* runs to more than 100 pages, as does its Oxford sequel, *Michaelmas Term at St Bride's* (sample: "Hilary yawned, raising her arms high above her head, and parting her silken dressing gown to the extent of revealing that she wore nothing but underclothes and silk stockings beneath it" etc) — is hardly pastiche. An occasional heightening of the sub-lesbian atmosphere, certainly, not to mention all those pert breasts; but the general effect is mostly one of homage rather than deliberate spoof.

There is even a cache of elegiac, Betjemanesque poems ("It's no good standing there and looking haughty:

-CASH IN ON ROYALTY!
THE QUEEN MOTHER BOOK OF THE FUNERAL
THE QUEEN MOTHER - A LIFE IN CLIPPINGS
ANOTHER QUEEN MOTHER BOOK
YOU CAN SHED TEARS THAT SHE IS GONE, OR YOU CAN SMILE BECAUSE SHE SELLS BOOKS!

I'm very cross: I think you've been a beast...") about hot pashes and summer cycling trips filed under the heading of "Sugar and Spice", written in the summer of 1943, which Larkin fans will be glad to know exists in the University of Hull's Brymor Jones Library in "a booklet of nine unnumbered pages, typed on recto only (254 X 203mm), the inner edges of the pages folded over to facilitate stitching with a single stretch of black thread..."The foregoing offers a clue to the kind of exegesis on offer in James Booth's introductory essay. Larkin's sexuality at this point in his life, it swiftly becomes apparent, was "undirected". Ah well, you see, back in 1942 he'd been rejected for military service owing to defective eyesight and "his self-feminisation may be seen as a response to this exemption from his male destiny". Plus, apparently he sympathised with his timid mother in her struggles against fascistic Pa Larkin. From here it is only a short step to Simone de Beauvoir, *Madchen in Uniform* and the extremely unwise use of the word "transgendering".

Larkin the ladyboy? Oh dear me. In fact, what we have here is a classic, though bizarre, case of the bright but embittered young man who doesn't get out enough, has difficulties with girls (it should be pointed out that Larkin got engaged to be married shortly after his schoolgirl literary phase) and looks for solace in a faintly obsessive male relationship, in this case with Kingsley.

Anyone who doubts the oddity of the latter tie-up, by the way, should read the stuff about young Mrs Amis of the early post-war era volunteering to pose topless for Phil's naughty photograph collection. The professional implications are that Larkin yearned passionately to be a novelist rather than a poet but simply lacked the necessary curiosity about other people.

Unpublished imitations of Dorita Fairlie Bruce were followed by two published novels — *Jill* (1945) and *A Girl in Winter* (1946) — the first promising, the second less so, after which Larkin lost what had never been a very dynamic impetus. The drafts and note books for subsequent novels appended to the volume are, you fear, interesting only in what can be read into them about Larkin's life. The rest is laboured. Meanwhile, this will sell about 10 copies, and is additionally mis-titled. The last lot of Larkin barrel scrapings, published last year, was called *Further Requirements*. Following this line, how about *Surplus to Requirements*? Just a suggestion, mind.

Books & Bookmen

■ BOOKSELLERS must already be clearing a suitably large space in their stockrooms for Sally Farmiloe's literary debut *How to Marry a Millionaire*. Although the book supposedly isn't expected until the autumn, *Daily Mail* readers were recently treated to a double-page spread on the subject in which Farmiloe and fellow slapper Bienvenida Buck dispensed sage advice on gold-digging.

Two questions spring to mind. Firstly, is the book ever going to appear? The *Mail* names no publisher in its puff, and a swift look at the databases reveals no such title scheduled. An identically-titled film project promoted by la Farmiloe never saw the light of day.

Secondly, do any of the intriguing vignettes in the article refer to now-imprisoned millionaire Lord Archole, with whom Farmiloe enjoyed a very physical relationship, mostly in car parks?

Sadly the article gave no clue on how to square bleating about invasions of privacy (as Farmiloe did when the Archer affair was exposed) with selling the whole shebang to the *News of the Screws* (as Farmiloe did immediately afterwards). Perhaps the book — if it ever emerges — will be more illuminating.

■ QUITE a few visitors to the London Book Fair last month were incensed to see print-on-demand publisher House of Stratus exhibiting from one of the largest and most ostentatious stands, while parading "celebrities" like Claire Rayner around, as part of its grand comeback effort.

The aggrieved were the many freelance editors, proofreaders and designers who are still waiting to be paid for work they did for the publisher before it went into receivership last year, owing millions to its shareholders and suppliers.

Unfortunately, they are all creditors of Stratus Holdings plc, the public company that hit the buffers; whereas the company now operating the imprint is House of Stratus Ltd, created by Stratus' founder David Lane to buy only the assets of the old company from the administrators.

In other operational respects the companies are identical, but this crucial difference means Lane doesn't have to face the music and cough up.

■ WATERSTONE's parent company HMV Media has finally announced its intention to float. Given the current troubles of major stakeholder EMI Group – which has just announced 1,800 redundancies from its record division — the timing is no great surprise.

Giles is understandably proud of the way the flotation "allows us to reward our employees by giving them the opportunity to become shareholders in the Group". He must also be worried, though, that former employees such as Tim "Dan Dare" Waterstone might see the issue as an opportunity to increase their own considerable shareholdings.

■ THE jacket blurb on Richard Lourie's new biography of Andrei Sakharov is a must-read for lovers of politicians' brazen revisionism. It includes a quote from a press conference given by Russian President Vladimir Putin in the US last November, at which he was asked for his opinion of dissidents like Sakharov.

"At certain periods of time in the life of any nation, there will be people who turn on the light, if you will. They show a road for the nation to follow. Andrei Sakharov was one of those people: a visionary, someone who was able not only to see the future, but to articulate his thoughts, and to do so without fear," he proclaimed.

This is a bit rich coming from a man who for many years served in the KGB, which, as Lourie's text relates in detail, went to great lengths to stop Sakharov "turning on the light".

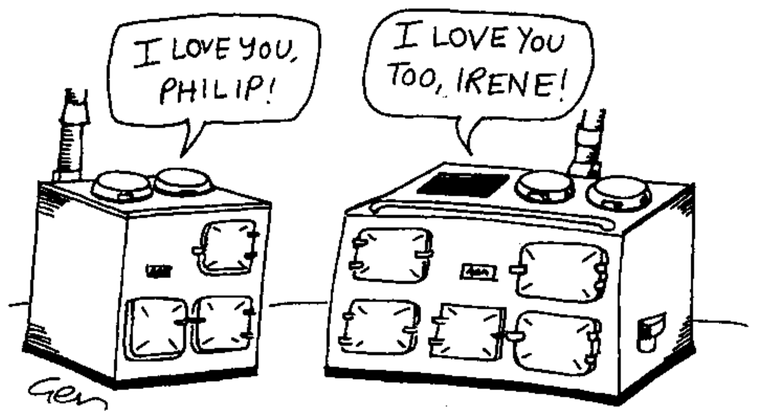
■ IT IS not unknown for publicists to post flattering comments about their authors' works which they have penned themselves on the internet book · shop Amazon.co.uk (see Eye 1005 on Hodder publicity agent Karen Geary's review of Amy Jenkins's first novel Honeymoon). But an online review of Ryszard Kapuscinski's novel, The Shadow of the Sun: My African Life published by Penguin, has gone one step further.

A lengthy and surprisingly well-written review of Kapuscinski's work which appears on Amazon, praises the book highly – "this is one of the finest books I have ever read about Africa" – and purports to have been sent in by "A reader from London, UK".

In fact this "reader's review" first appeared in the Daily Mail last June, as a book review written by novelist Justin Cartwright. Cartwright did not give his permission to reprint the review, but it seems the opportunity was too good to miss.

'Bookworm'

Forsyte Agas



Pseuds Corner

PITMAN – On March 18th, 2002, to ALLISON "Pooee" (nee Gubbins) and SPENCER, a beautiful daughter, Mimi Magenta Poodle

***Daily Telegraph* birth announcements**

...These two ostinatos are rhythmically similar and tonally opposite: the first starts with chord I and ends with chord IV, the second starts with V and returns to I. Even the latter of these is without strong, harmonic progression, since I is reached locally from IV, with movement by fourth in the bass predominating, making the piece tonally static – a fact aided by triadic consonance and the shortness (that is, the high density of the repetition) of the ostinato sections...

'Wannabe' by the Spice Girls, as analysed by *Popular Music*, a new academic journal published by the Cambridge University Press

It actually felt as if something in society shifted.

JOHN CLEESE greets Halle Berry's Oscar
Los Angeles Times

We pass each other hurrying down the long corridors of the hotel on the way to different events and commitments. But, eventually, we find an early morning slot where we can meet. We sit wordlessly in my room gazing into each other's faces. I know her face so well – every curve of it, every nuance of expression. There seems to be nothing to say, because so much has been said over the years and yet never enough to begin to describe the complexity of our relationship and the extraordinary endeavour we have shared. So an hour passes in silence as we sit, open-faced, opposite each other, occasionally embracing.

From director Sally Potter's diary of the making of *Orlando*, quoted in *New Yorker* profile of its starring actress, Tilda Swinton

My child was not only carried by me, but by the universe.

CELINE DION
Radio Times

Pseuds Corporate

KSA-MMM offers a depth of expertise that far exceeds generic consulting services, offering a vertical pipeline perspective...

Kurt Salmon Associates, management consultants advertises its services

CONTRIBUTORS: Mrs H.C. Bell, Emily Harrup, Peter McAuley, Timothy Knapman, Jenny Price, Jonathan Rosenberg.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

SWEET FA (and FL for that matter)

BEFORE the world cup finals start, the football authorities in Britain are hoping to lay to rest the embarrassing story of Gurnam Singh, the only Asian ever to make it into the top flight of British football referees.

In a long, meticulous and devastating judgment last December, a Birmingham industrial tribunal held unanimously that Mr Singh, an accountant from Wolverhampton, had been discriminated against on the grounds of his race by the Football League; the National Review Board for match officials; by Mr Jim Ashworth, the head of that board; and by Mr Ken Ridden who was accurately described a "a god or almost a god in refereeing circles".

The main discrimination took place between 1991 and 1996 when Mr Singh was systematically overlooked for promotion to the premier league and play-off matches in the lower leagues. The climax came in 1994-95 when he was rated Number One Referee in the Football League by independent assessors, and in the following year when he came second. In both years he was overlooked for promotion to the premier league even though other referees (Alcock; Winter; Barber; Riley) were promoted with lower scoring assessments.

In 1995, when Gurnam Singh's name was suggested for promotion, Mr Ridden announced: "We don't want people like him in the premier league." The climax came in 1999 when Mr Singh was removed from the approved list of referees for "reasons" that would not have applied had he been white.

Over its long hearing, which lasted for 40 days in 2000 and 2001, the tribunal firmly denounced the Football League, the National Review Board, and Messrs Ashworth and Ridden for racially discriminating against Gurnam Singh. They contrasted the approach of both men and their organisations with the Kick Racism Out of Football campaign launched in the 1990s by all the football authorities. The campaign called on "players, coaches, referees and administrators to ensure that the image of the national game is not tarnished by the use or the acceptance of offensive language likely to incite insult or provoke others".

Gurnam Singh

So what has happened in the four months since the tribunal judgment was announced? On 5 December last year, the Football League set up an "immediate internal inquiry to examine the circumstances that led to the tribunal's decision". The inquiry has not yet reported nor can a league spokesman give any indication when it will. Mr Singh has not been contacted by anyone connected with the inquiry. His lawyers still grapple with those of the Football League in trying to sort out some sort of compensation. The league spokesman was fairly certain that any settlement would be arrived at behind closed doors and would not be publicised in court.

Mr Ridden meanwhile still holds high office assessing and advising referees in UEFA, the football association for Europe, and owes his position there to the Football Association. Mr Ashworth, the Football League confirms, still heads the national organisation for referees. Asked why no action had been taken against him after the tribunal's indictment, a league spokesman said that any action depended on the result of the internal inquiry.

FEAR... AND LOTHIAN

The Tories were still in office on 26 February 1997 when Dr Judith Salter, chief officer of the community health council in Calderdale, Yorks, wrote to Howard Foster, project manager for the Calderdale Healthcare Trust. She wanted to know about the new Calderdale hospital to be built under PFI by the Catalyst consortium, headed by Bovis.

What worried Dr Salter and her CHC was the future ownership of the hospital. They realised that for 30 years the hospital buildings would have to be leased to the private consortium, but what would happen after that? She fired off a series of questions.

One asked who will own the existing buildings (those which have not been demolished) at the end of the 30-year agreement. The Healthcare Trust answer was one word: "Trust". Another question asked who will own the *new* buildings at the end of the 30-year agreement? The answer was the same: "Trust".

In other words, the NHS Trust would take over the ownership of old and new hospital buildings as soon as the 30 years was over. This came as some comfort to the CHC members, who were worried that the NHS would eventually lose the hospital to the consortium.

A few weeks later, a Labour government was elected and continued enthusiastically with the PFI that in opposition it had originally opposed. Work was completed on the new PFI Calderdale Royal hospital, replacing three old hospitals in Halifax. Last month the *Yorkshire Post* disclosed that the hospital "will not belong to the NHS Trust at the end of the 30-year lease". Instead, the buildings will be owned by the private consortium for yet another 30 years.

After 30 years, the NHS will have shelled out £480m in interest payments to the private consortium for a hospital that cost £76m to build — and at the end of 30 years will have to renegotiate terms with the consortium for leasing the hospital for another 30 years. Somehow, under "new" Labour, the trust has emerged with even worse terms than those negotiated under the Tories.

A SIMILAR problem looms in Edinburgh, where the old Royal Infirmary has been replaced with one of the biggest new PFI projects in the country.

Under plain envelope to the *Eye* comes a report from something called the Pan Lothian Review Group. It is marked "private and confidential". The chairman is Jim Findlay, who chairs the West Lothian Healthcare Trust, and the other members include Prof Colin Bird, dean of Edinburgh University Medical School, and John Matheson, director of finance for the Lothian NHS Board .

The report estimates what it calls the "shortfall" between anticipated income and expenditure at the Lothian University Hospitals Trust, including the new Edinburgh Royal, for the next four years. After 2003 the shortfall goes from bad to catastrophic with an estimated deficit of £9.4m in 2003-4 rising to £14.8m for the next two years.

The main reason for this disastrous situation is the PFI scheme under which the new hospital was built. The report argues weakly for a "more robust system" but cannot explain how the trust is going to get out of its mess without severe cuts in services (or more government

MORE MOORE

THE EYE HAS HAD THE FOLLOWING LETTER FROM DET SUPT BRIAN MOORE OF THE METROPOLITAN POLICE

Re: "Moore the Merrier"
I am most concerned about the factual inaccuracies in the above article which have caused distress to myself and my family. I am not, nor have I ever been, a member of the "Walthamstow Overseas Geographical Society" (WOGS).

For your information, I went on four holidays to the Mediterranean and Aegean between 1983 and 1988 as part of a group of police and non-police holidaymakers. Some of the group, myself included, played football against local people. However, there was never actually a "football team". No games were arranged in advance of the holidays. The group, whose composition varied from year to year, did not play football between the holidays and it was not named "WOGS".

You state in your article that "WOGS" was "formed in the late 1980s"'. I must repeat that I have had no involvement with any football or holiday group since 1988 either in this country or abroad. I must also make it plain that I have never served at Walthamstow.

These allegations were first raised in 1999 when I was leading a major corruption inquiry. A highly respected senior police officer, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Roy Clarke QPM, looked into the issues raised at the time and found no basis for a disciplinary investigation.

This is the second time that you have published these allegations, which are damaging to my integrity and reputation. Now that you are aware of the facts, I am sure that you will undertake not to publish these slurs again and will also print an immediate retraction. I await your early response.

MR MOORE is right at least once. The police holiday football team and drinking club known as the Walthamstow Overseas Geographical Society (WOGS) was formed in the early 1980s, not the late 1980s.

The *Eye* has a photograph of the team in Rhodes, where WOGS were soundly defeated. Kneeling in the front row is a young detective (now chief superintendent) Brian Moore. We have heard from several former officers who all assure us that the team was known as WOGS. One former detective sergeant remembers a poster on the noticeboards of the flying squad office at Walthamstow and the police station at Stoke Newington (where Mr Moore served) announcing a forthcoming WOGS tour.

Two of our sources are quite clear that WOGS did organise football matches in advance. Mr Moore recalls that the "allegations" about WOGS arose during a corruption inquiry he was leading. He will also recall that a central figure in the inquiry was a former flying squad detective called Terry McGuinness. In the course of this inquiry, Mr McGuiness made a statement that included the following passage. "It was whilst I was on holiday with a number of my colleagues in Cyprus. There was a group of people known collectively as the Walthamstow Overseas Geographical Society, who annually went away for a jolly up."

Mr McGuinness has been described by Met officers and Crown counsel as a "witness of truth". Of course Mr Moore never served at Walthamstow, but WOGS tours were not limited to officers in Walthamstow. We were not aware that there was any form of inquiry into any of these matters by deputy assistant commissioner Clarke, and would be fascinated to know more about this inquiry – especially what matters there were for such a senior officer to "look into".

MONUMENTAL ALABASTER

AMONG the least-lamented prospects for staff at British Airways is the possible loss of their chairman, Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge. He will be 69 later this year, and his popularity is fading fast, especially among BA pensioners.

Eye readers will recall the botched attempt by the BA board to merge the company's two pension schemes: APS, the old generous scheme; and NAPS, the new much-less generous scheme. The merger was in blatant breach of a promise made by Lord Marshall in 1984 that one scheme would never be allowed to subsidise another. Indeed, the whole point of the merger was for the old scheme with lots of assets (APS) to subsidise the new scheme with fewer assets (NAPS).

Not long after this scam was exposed in *Eye* 1012, the trustees reversed their original decision and voted against the merger. The decision infuriated BA, whose bosses have still not decided how to respond to it.

Meanwhile a new device has emerged to annoy BA pensioners. It dates back to 1986 and an extraordinary "request" from Colin Marshall, then chief executive of British Airways. He asked the APS trustees to rewrite their rules to include a new rule allowing them to pay, out of their pension fund, "augmented benefits" to BA employees. To do this they required the consent of the scheme's actuary; then it was Robert Watson, who later became Watson Wyatt, who later became actuary for British Airways.

To transfer money in this way, BA did not even need the agreement of the APS trustees, who have a fiduciary responsibility to the beneficiaries of the trust fund. And the amended rule gives BA the power to provide benefits to employees who are not even contributing members or pensioners of the APS fund.

The trustees meekly agreed to Marshall's request and seven trustees voted for a new rule (34) to do British Airways' bidding. *Whoops!* The rules of the trust deed insisted that two-thirds of its members (that is eight members) had to vote for a change of rule before such a change was valid. So the meeting that voted the change was inquorate — though nobody seemed to care very much at the time.

From 1989, when APS first notched up a surplus, BA, which has not contributed a single penny to the scheme since 1989, has consistently ordered the trustees to make "augmented payments" out of the pension money. These payments have been made to employees, not to pensioners, and have enabled British Airways to "top up" their offers to workers during wage negotiations.

How much has been looted in this way? Independent actuary Barnett Waddingham has advised pensioners that the cost to the pension scheme of these "augmented payments" since 1986 has been a staggering £339m, a sum not unadjacent to the amount swiped by Robert Maxwell from his firm's pension fund before he took an early bath in the Atlantic.

Captain Alabaster: War hero

Not surprisingly, older pensioners have not been very happy about these arrangements, and are specially annoyed by Lord Marshall who has not only broken his promise to pensioners but whose company, with the help of a change of rule made by an inquorate meeting, has been nibbling away at their pension fund for nearly 20 years.

One irritated pensioner is pilot Captain Cliff Alabaster, who served with distinction in BA's predecessor BOAC and is a highly-decorated war hero. He was one of the very few to survive a hundred operational bombing missions during world war two. As an experienced pilot of the former Comet aircraft, Capt Alabaster was invited to attend the celebrations at Cosford next month to commemorate 50 years since the world's first commercial jet passenger flight. When he discovered that Lord Marshall had agreed to attend the celebrations, the captain refused the invitation. He told a pensioners' meeting last October that he would have nothing to do with the event "in view of the attitude of Lord Marshall and the board of British Airways".

The applause was deafening.

MEANIE MOONIE

FORMER trooper Roger Viggars now gets a war pension because he was injured while serving overseas nearly 20 years ago. But the ministry of defence refuses to pay his pension from the time he was actually injured.

While serving in the British armed forces in Canada in 1973, Mr Viggars was hit by a car and was so badly injured he spent many months in military hospitals. He was discharged from the army in 1976 and asked at his local social security office if he was entitled to a war pension. He was told that he wasn't, and he let the matter drop.

Many years later, in 1995, after a friend suggested the department for social services (DSS) advice could have been wrong, he applied for a war disability pension — and got it! Not surprisingly, he assumed he was entitled to claim the pension from the time he was injured: a sum, he reckons, amounting to about £25,000. But no, apparently, he wasn't.

He complained to his MP David Wright, the Labour member for Telford, who passed the issue on to the MoD. The result was a letter from Lewis Moonie, parliamentary under secretary. "The war pensions legislation provides that an award may be backdated in certain specified circumstances but this provision has time limits. An award can be backdated for an unlimited period where the delay in claiming is due to an administrative error by staff at the DSS."

The letter went on: "The war pensions agency has on numerous occasions requested that Mr Viggars provide supporting evidence to this effect. If he were to do so, his request for backdating would certainly be considered." Mr Viggars, of course, can't provide proof of an unrecorded conversation with a DSS clerk 16 years ago.

So although the MoD agree that he was disabled while serving in the armed forces, he can't be compensated for that disablement for most of the 20 years he has suffered from his injuries.

A new law a year ago gives former servicemen the right to appeal against a refusal to back-date their war pension. So can Roger Viggars appeal? Er, no. Mr Moonie explains that the decision to pay the pension was made before the new law came into effect. To complete the picture, the new law "does not give any retrospective right of appeal to decisions made before 9th April 2001".

POLICE 5

All in the cells

LAST month the high court ruled that police can hold on to DNA samples from people who have been accused of crimes and later acquitted. But there's a different rule for the police themselves, it seems.

Giving judgment in the cases of a 12-year-old boy who was acquitted of attempted robbery and a Sheffield man who was arrested on harassment charges which were later dropped, Mr Justice Levenson accepted that "strong feelings" might be aroused by the retention of DNA but concluded that the human rights act allowed it.

John Wadham, the director of civil rights group Liberty, said: "We believe it is against the principles of the human rights act and the data protection act for innocent people to have their DNA kept indefinitely. We will be seeking to challenge the fact that this continues, both in the courts in this country and in the European courts if we are not successful."

The irony of the ruling is that while police chiefs are eager to hang on to DNA samples from those cleared of crimes, ordinary coppers are not so willing to hand over their own samples. Fewer than half the 126,000 police officers in England and Wales have volunteered their DNA for the police elimination database which aims to ensure officers' own DNA does not confuse investigations.

Fred Broughton, the chairman of the Police Federation, said: "The Police Federation fully supports the DNA database for police officers to facilitate the elimination of innocent contamination by police personnel who may be connected to a crime scene. Many officers are, however, concerned that compulsory testing may breach human rights and are worried by a potential for medical and genetic profiling from the samples provided."

A police source commented: "Their concern is that advances in DNA are going so quickly that while they say it is only going to be used for elimination, the samples could be used to pick up ill health conditions that police officers have that maybe they themselves don't know about. What happens if that then comes to light? Do they get the sack? I suppose they think it is an invasion of privacy."

The same might be said by those innocent people whose DNA samples are still held by the police. There is hope in sight, however, in the form of the information commissioner, Britain's official privacy watchdog, who has warned the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) that under the data protection act 1998 such information should only be kept as long as it is necessary for a particular purpose. If ACPO remains unconvinced, the commissioner could resort to legal action against a police force to test the law.

LOCKERBIE: Latest

THE massed ranks of *Eye* readers who bought and read our pamphlet *Lockerbie: The Flight from Justice* may recall its postscript: the long and crucial account of Dr Hans Koechler, who had been nominated by the United Nations as an observer to the Camp Zeist trial of the two Libyans accused of the Lockerbie bombing.

Dr Koechler concluded: "The outcome of the trial may well have been determined by political considerations"; and he expressed the hope that the appeal would put matters right. He has now published his findings on the appeal, which upheld the decision of the trial judges and sent the defendant Abdul Basset Al Megrahi to prison in Glasgow for 20 years. Dr Koechler is now even more critical.

He concludes: "Regrettably, the decision of the appeal court was not a victory for justice, but for power politics. The proceedings have proved that a legally-guaranteed separation of powers in a system which prides itself on its commitment to the rule of law is not a sufficient safeguard against political interference so as to ensure the independence and impartiality of criminal proceedings."

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

THE caution expressed by the serious farce office (SFO) in the wake of its nationwide swoop on generic drug companies last week is well placed. There is considerable scepticism about the chances of a successful prosecution among those with knowledge of the investigation into a possible £400m price-fixing and overcharging fraud on the National Health Service.

Doubts about the likely evidence or possible charges help explain why no arrest was made – even to question a suspect suit – and the word is this could be a slow burn. Indeed, there are even those who see the whole affair has more driven by political imperatives (at a time when the government is about to announce billions more for the NHS) than any criminal certainty. Cracking down on NHS fraud is essential spin if the taxpayer is being asked to ante up more.

The generic drug inquiry has its origins in an investigation carried out by the department of health's recently formed "counter fraud directorate" under the ambitious Jim Gee. Both he and his political masters have been keen to start plugging the huge hole fraud rips from the NHS each year – estimated to be up to £2bn.

Prosecuting guilty doctors, dentists and opticians may make the headlines, but it rarely involves more than relative pennies. The biggest prosecution to date involved £4m for supplying locum medical staff. So the drug companies were a tempting target given that generic drugs alone cost the NHS around 15 percent of its £5bn a year drugs spend.

The companies made themselves even more attractive as a target by an orgy of suspected price gouging from 1998 when the prices of some drugs rose by as much as 1400 percent in a year. After all, generics are supposed to be cheap unlike the brand names which profit the drug industry giants. So there was considerable pressure within the department of health for Gee to go for it, especially after further evidence was collected by private investigators at the Risk Advisory Group.

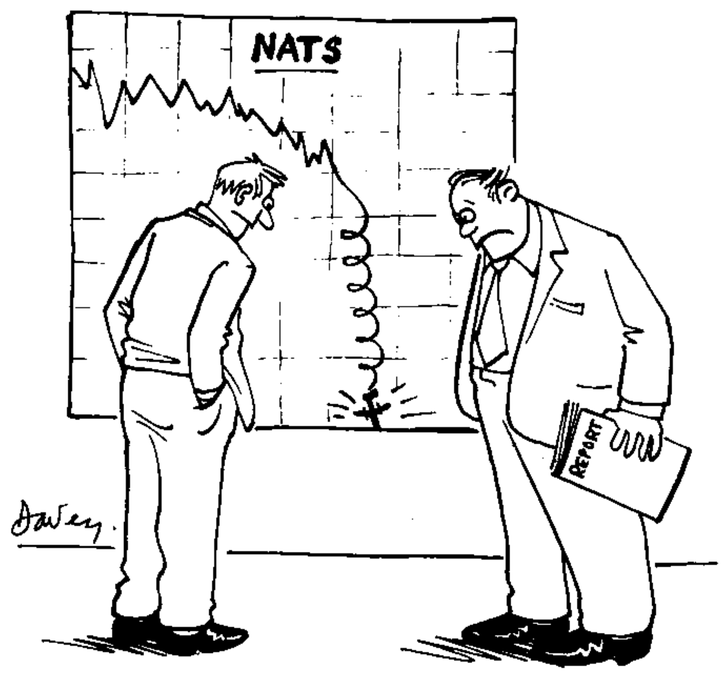
Several months ago the crown prosecution service (CPS) was asked to advise on the proposed prosecution of those generic drug suppliers which had been providing various penicillin-based antibiotics and the blood-thinning agent warfarin – products whose prices had soared since 1996.

To the angst of health secretary Alan Milburn, said to have paid close attention to the investigation, the CPS response was lukewarm. The problem was seeing the criminal fraud as distinct from the civil wrong of price-fixing or over-charging. At what stage did price-fixing become a conspiracy to defraud? When was over-charging fraud? How could it be proved that the companies were fraudulently claiming a falsely high price as distinct from maximising profits in the good old capitalist way?

Undeterred, Milburn and Gee took their case to the SFO. But here too there was initial reluctance. There was concern that the case had insufficient legal merit to succeed in court. And what the SFO most certainly did not want was to mount a high profile action which either did not result in any bodies or, worse, was thrown out after the publicity of charges and an anticipated trial.

Such a result would be hugely expensive, not just in possible compensation but to the SFO's much refurbished reputation at a time when director Ros Wright is pushing hard to be at the heart of a national fraud squad and to see juries removed from complex fraud cases. Both proposals that have supporters in the government.

The failure to convict anyone in the Peter Young case has revived criticisms from the bad old days of Maxwell, Roger Levitt and Blue



Arrow, even if that is somewhat unfair given that without "Elizabeth" there was always going to be a problem.

But Milburn was not, it seems, prepared to take no for an answer. The attorney-general Lord Goldsmith seems to have become involved. The SFO was pressed to take a second and more enthusiastic look and to ignore those within its own organisation and outside who had already expressed serious reservations. This political pressure has obviously paid off, even though the arguments have raged since December. The raids were originally due to have gone off in February.

So last week Milburn and Gee got their headlines… just days before the budget when Gordon Brown was due to declare that spending more will make the patient better.

But while the politicians move on, the SFO is now left with how to solve the £400m problem. It has to "get the handcuffs" on to justify the hype. But what if that proves difficult or impossible because of the companies' explanations? One expected line of defence is that the price rises merely compensated for unfair previous price caps or reductions imposed by the government.

What if there is no provable criminal offence? Successful US price-fixing cases – brought under tough anti-trust (cartel) legislation which Britain is only just moving towards – have tended to rely on an insider who was at the secret meetings at which prices were fixed with supposed competitors. This made all the difference in the Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) citric acid case which ultimately resulted in the US government collecting more than $1bn in fines from first animal feed and then vitamin producers.

Does the SFO have such a key witness? The alternative is to bombard a jury with complex financial analysis of industry data and price theories. Before it won with ADM, the US justice department's anti-trust division suffered a humiliating defeat over General Electric and its alleged industrial diamonds price fixing with De Beers.

Of course given the time it usually takes the SFO to investigate more obvious frauds, it may be next year before any decision is reached and any trial could be years away. And if the answer is no case to answer, by then Milburn and friends will have moved on, leaving the SFO to explain another fine mess that was not entirely of its own making.

JUST FANCY THAT!

THE SFO-led operation saw the offices of six drug companies raided, including a company linked to Nahdmi Auchi, late of Saddam's Iraq.

Auchi, who owns Regent-GM Laboratories, is no stranger to controversy or investigation. He is wanted for questioning in France over the Elf corruption scandal.

MORE on Dieter Bock, who sailed into and out of Lonrho to such good effect several years ago. The German property developer is now concentrating on his South African interests which include a local soccer club.

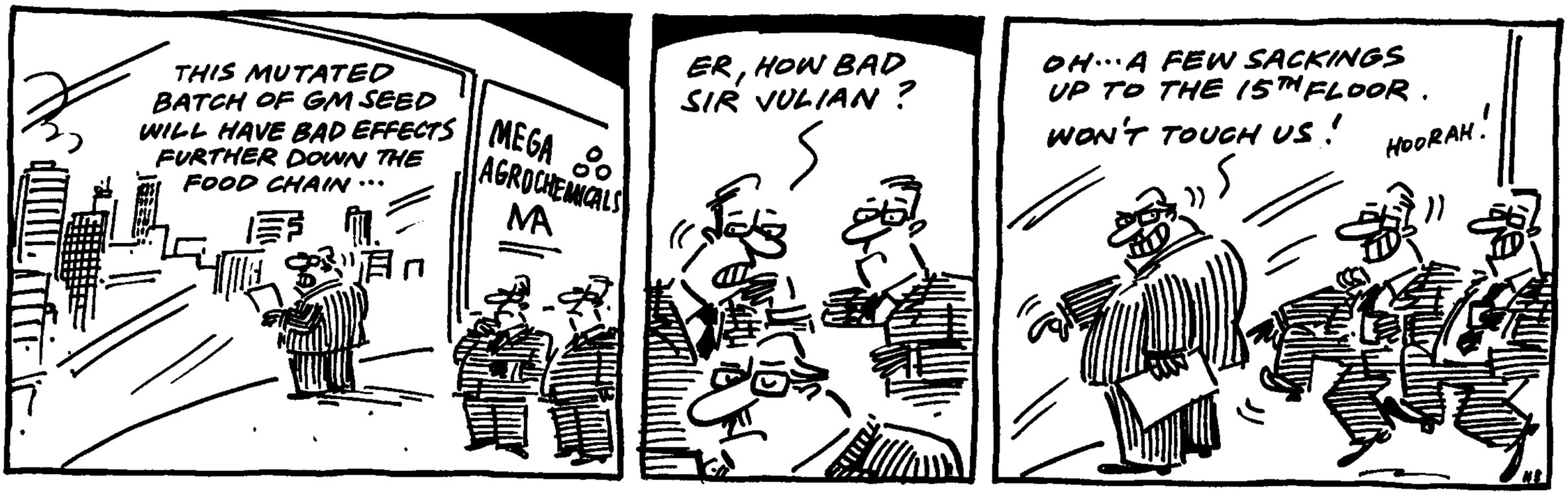
In a blast from the past that emerged from the high court just before Easter, Bock has been effectively ordered to pay a long-standing £250,000 debt to his former indivisible partner turned bitter rival "Tiny" Rowland, who has triumphed from beyond the grave over the man who manoeuvred him out of Lonrho.

The action was brought by Rowland's estate over a disputed agreement between Bock and Swedish banker and insider-dealer Christian Norgren who introduced the two men in 1993. Bock paid him £1.35m after he bought Rowland's Lonrho stake. Bock then signed an agreement with Norgren to find investors for his Advanta property group in return for a percentage or a flat £250,000. No investor had been found by the time Bock terminated the agreement in 1994, refusing to pay the £250,000. Norgren had by then become closer to Rowland.

Soon afterwards it emerged that Norgren was wanted in the US for insider dealing in Combustion Engineering ahead of a 1989 bid from Asea Brown Boveri where he was a director. Norgren settled a civil claim by the Securities & Exchange Commission in 1991 by handing over £1.8m including a $300,000 fine. But a criminal

THE DIRECTORS

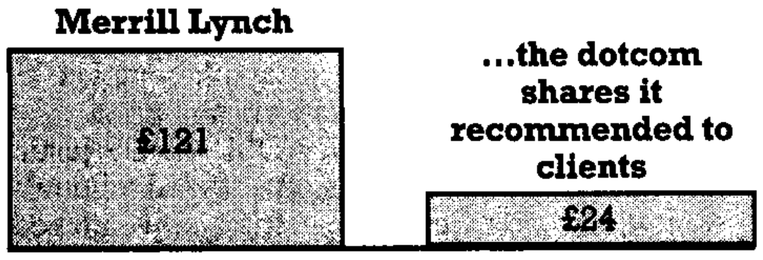
DREDGE/RIGG


THIS MUTATED BATCH OF GM SEED WILL HAVE BAD EFFECTS FURTHER DOWN THE FOOD CHAIN …
MEGA AGROCHEMICALS
MA
ER, HOW BAD SIR VULIAN ?
OH…A FEW SACKINGS UP TO THE 15TH FLOOR. WON'T TOUCH US!
HOORAH!

Stock Horror

"Pieces of shit"*

Value of £100 invested three years ago in...



**What Merrill's dotcom analyst Henry Blodget privately called some of the shares he recommended. Merrill is now under investigation over its tips.*

case was launched against him for fraud and obstruction of justice.

Bock claimed he did not have to pay because Norgren had breached his confidence by discussing Advanta with Rowland. Deposed from Lonrho, Rowland in 1996 bought the Norgren claim for £1 on an assignment from the fugitive Swede as part of his feud with Bock.

The case came to trial in London in 1997 but before it could be concluded Norgren was arrested on an extradition warrant. This was subsequently not proceeded with, allowing Norgren to flee before it was restored by then home secretary Jack Straw. A later attempt by the Americans to extradite Norgren from Switzerland also failed. Norgren gave evidence in the recent hearing by video link from Germany where he had defeated an initial attempt at extradition.

After a two-week hearing, judgment was given by Mr Justice Newman for the Rowland estate. "Mr Bock has attempted to put forward any excuse he possibly could, regardless of its merit, to defeat the claim," declared Newman, who declined to believe key Bock evidence. "I am unimpressed by the attempts made by Mr Bock at this very late stage, years after the event, to piece together the sequence of events... Mr Bock's evidence was delivered with a sense of conviction derived from recent rationalisation which leaves it unreliable as to the detail."

Bock, the judge said, did not intend to pay because he felt betrayed even though there was no evidence of a breach of confidence by Norgren. Bock's tactics – including making "insincere statements" – were indicative of his "manipulative powers and temperament... I can see no reason in equity and justice why he should not pay what he promised to pay," the judge concluded.

Subject to any appeal Bock now faces a bill with costs and interest nearer to £1m than the £250,000 he tried to avoid paying. But then he received £258m when he sold his Lonrho shares to Anglo-American in 1996 so he can afford such a pyrrhic and costly exercise.

'Slicker'

Number crunching

£2,000,000

Fine for Arriva Trains Northern for causing "so much misery for its passengers" in 2001

£200,000

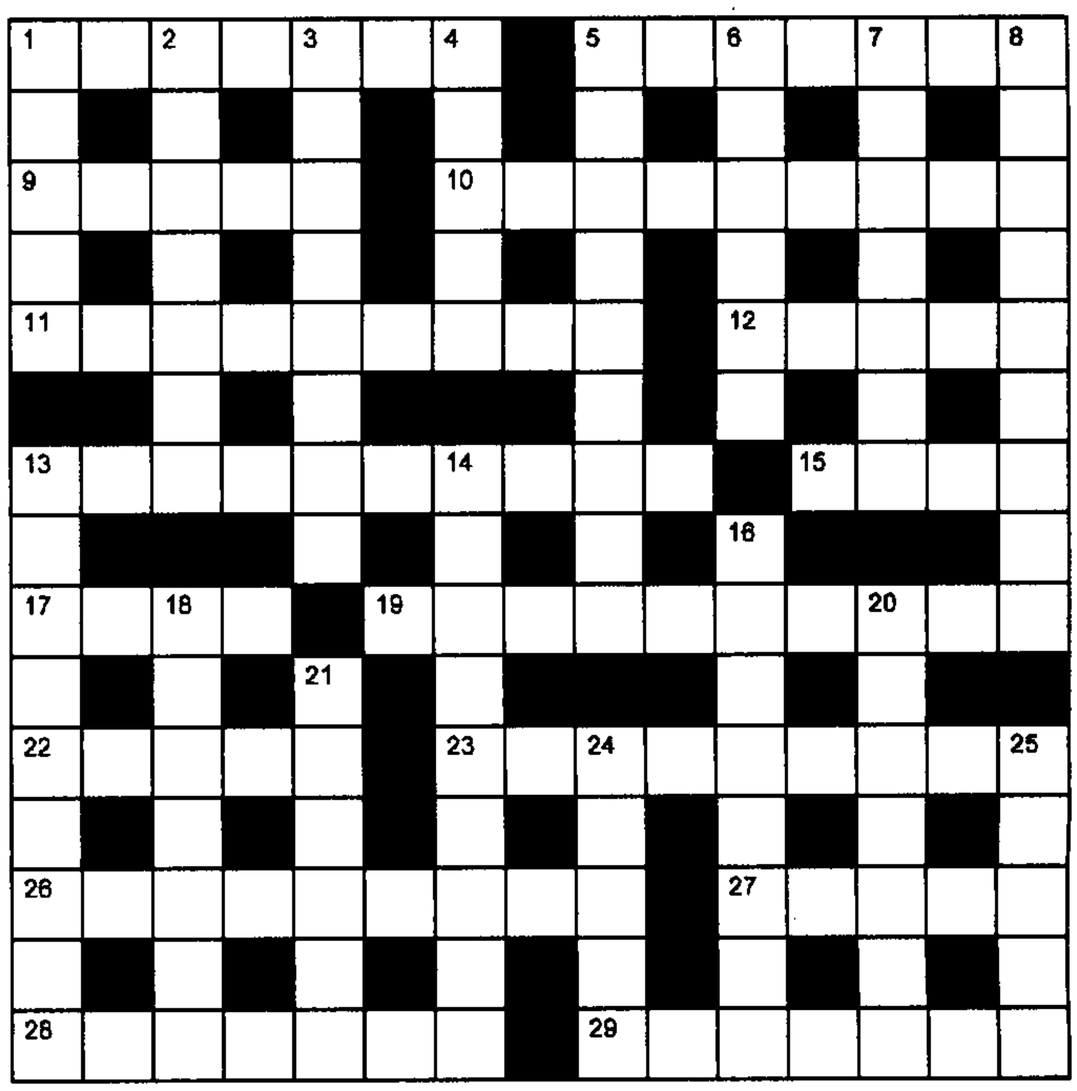
'Performance' bonus paid to Arriva chief executive Bob Davies for 2001

EYE CROSSWORD 207

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 26 April 2002.

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk



ACROSS

1 Faithfully abused confection, allegedly resulting from world ban (4,3)
5 Brenda mated with spaceman in drunken outburst – hardly a Defender of the Faith (7)
9 One in love contest is coming, arse half out (5)
10 Hen bash for a dumbo (4-5)
11 Gordon Brown's thing? Finally the joker's got Tony's guts (9)
12 Awful strain – that's flipping gobbling a soldier ... (1.4)
13/19 ... poking (being erect) followed by double whisky, perhaps, and showing signs of insulting behaviour (8,2,3,7)
15 Express leader article about twice-married luvvie (4)
17 Act like a slapper? That's a turn-up (4)
19 See 13ac.
22 Gobbled by "love god", as all may see, and now spent in Paris (5)
23 One who has a sexual thing about his tits, following 'female energy' (9)
26 End of *Pubic Hair* variation by Ravi – terrible cacophony (9)
27 The old blokes on the inside, backing the Opposition (5)
28 Cowardly desire to clasp member close to one (7)
29 'Beefy' going down on ass (3-4)

DOWN

1 Some farmer declared "Chirac's shit!" (5)
2 Perhaps a 'starter' instrument wielded by Provisional IRA (7)
3 Throw up hair-balls (8)
4 Go on, drop Tony's top spiritual leader (5)
5 Whisky resistant Roger (4,5)
6 Johnny's US-style masseur (6)
7 Pissed romeo at a drinking place (3,4)
8 They are what they eat (9)
13 Put bag over scarlet woman who's objectionable? Don't knock it (6,3)
14 Latest exposure of member's an intrusion on the viewer (9)
16 Thoroughly uncool Iain's half embracing New Labour (2,1,5)
18 Arouse member a piece (7)
20 A good looker wouldn't give it you (4,3)
21 Slightly more refined arse lives over one in Umbrian town (6)
24 The end of shirt (if he dithers) lifter (5)
25 Conservative right expelled journalist and played (5)

Crossword 206 winner: CAT MOSS

Solution to Crossword 206

ACROSS: 1/17 Her Majesty's Pleasure 9 Lambada 10 Utrillo 11 Brits 12 Colostomy 13 Legal aid 15 Pick-up 18 Merits 19 Plughole 22 Shangri-la 24 Pokes 25 Lesotho 26 Ugandan 27 Arse over tip.

DOWN: 1 Humdinger 2 Rears 3 Anarchic 4 Equals 5 Thrusting 6 Salvo 7 Global 8 Cosy up 14 Litigates 16 Knocked up 18 Muscle 20 Easing 21 Gigolo 23 At sea 24 Plant.

YOBS
HUSBAND
You're charged with threatening behaviour. How do you plead?
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CID
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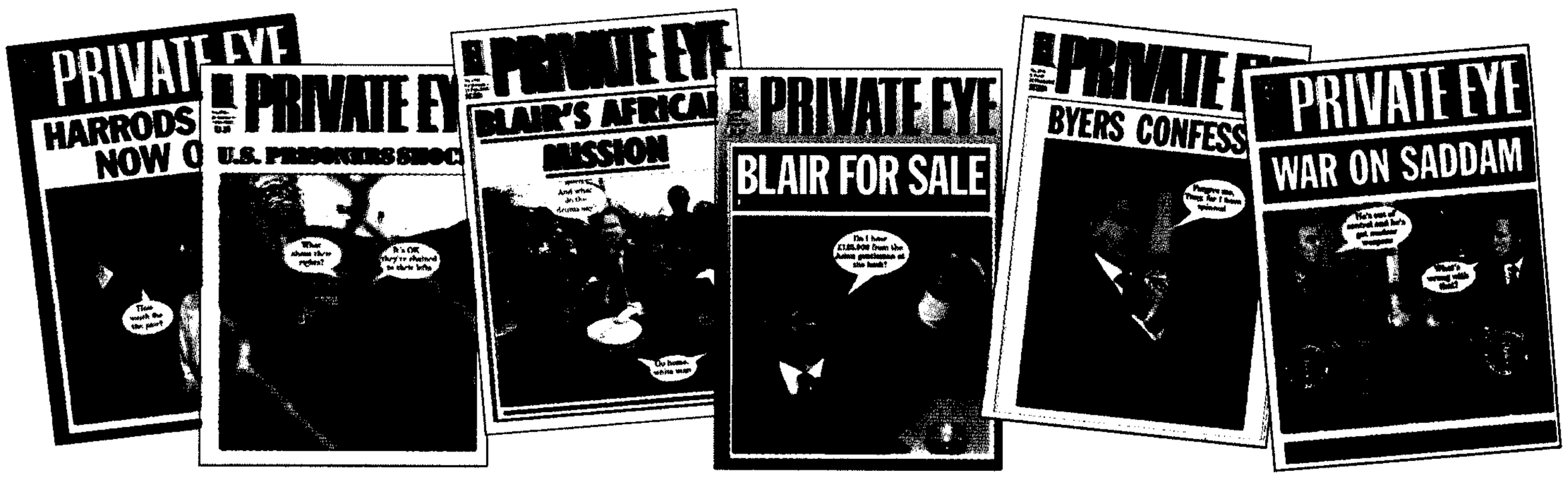

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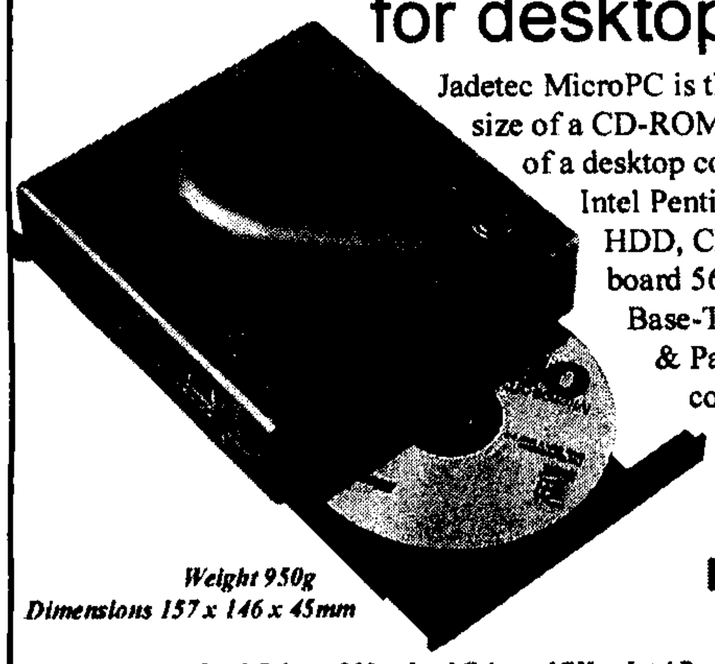

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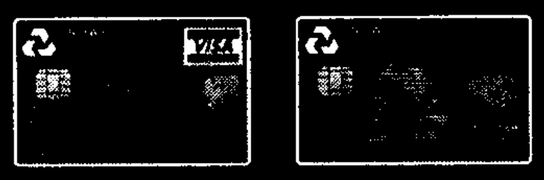

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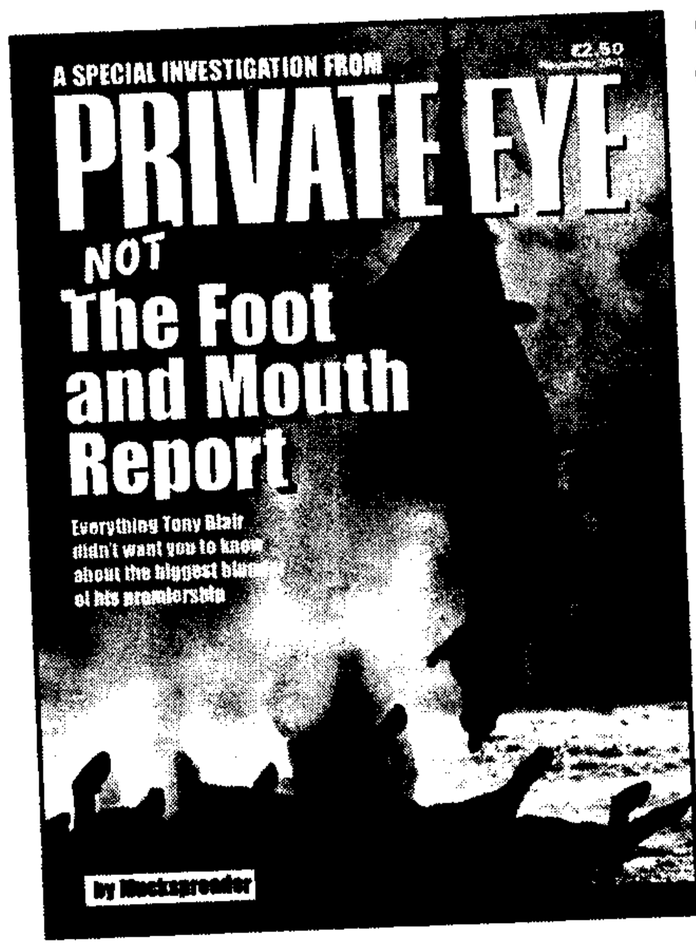
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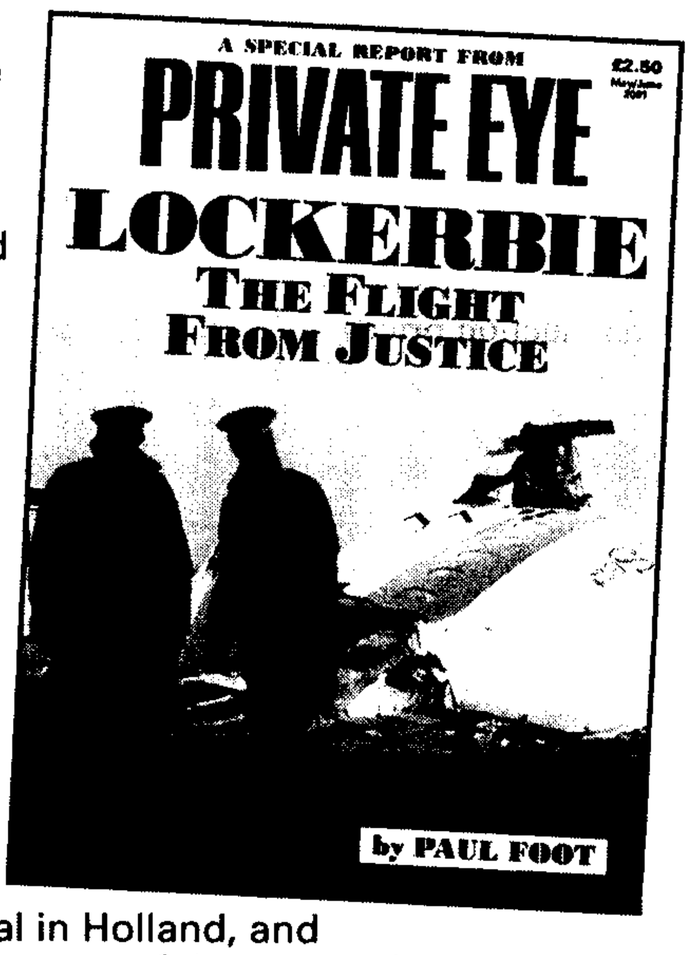

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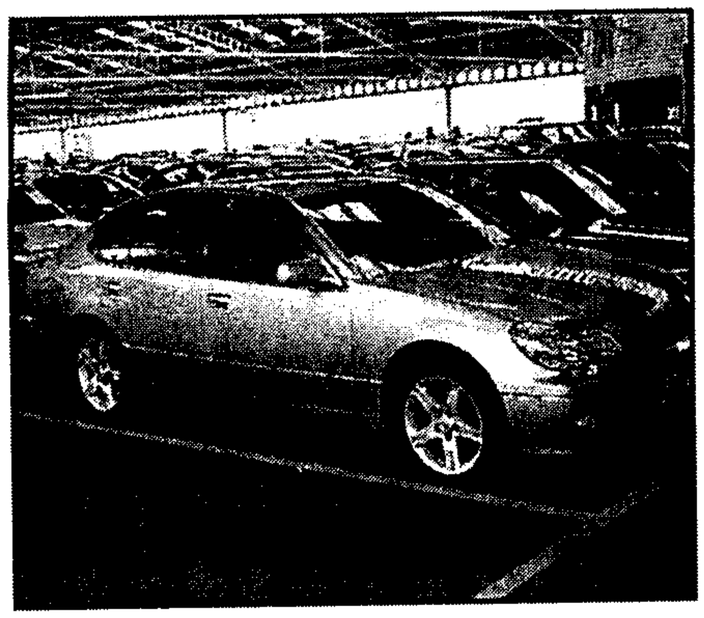

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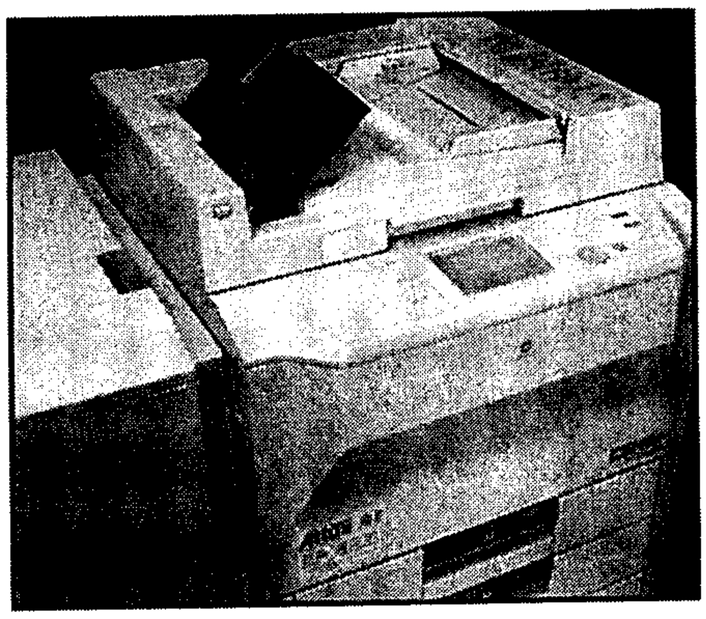

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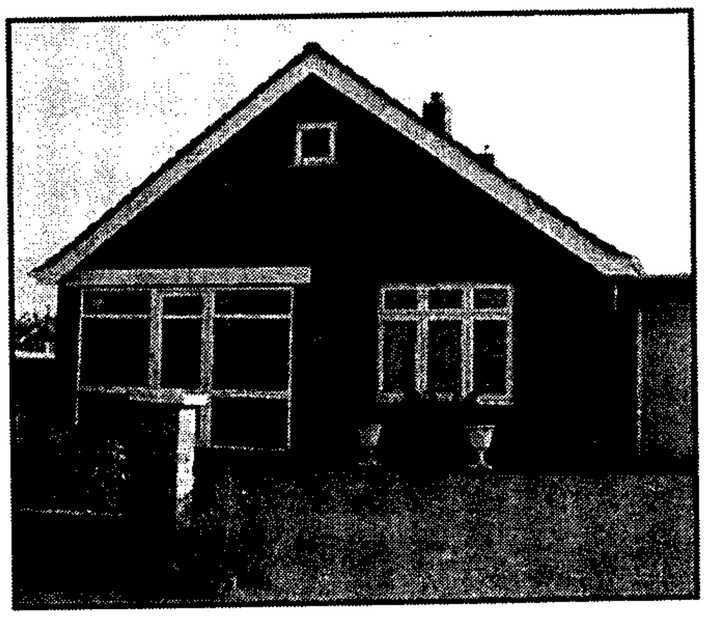

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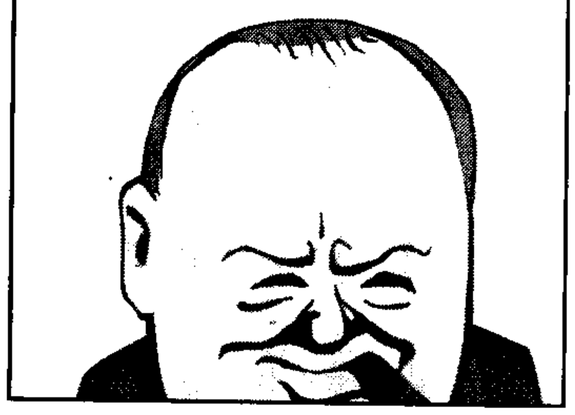

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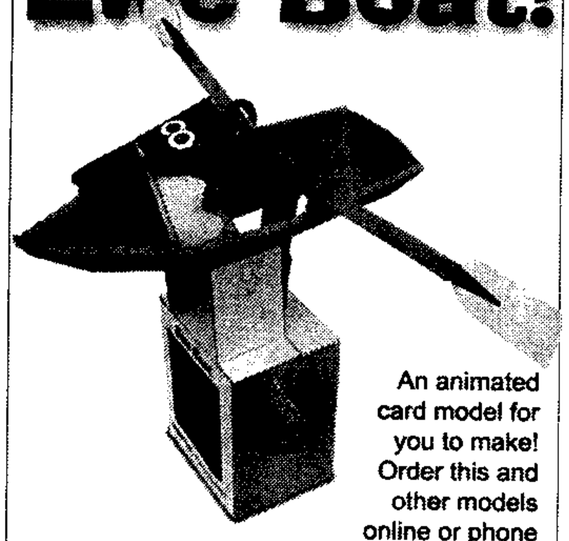

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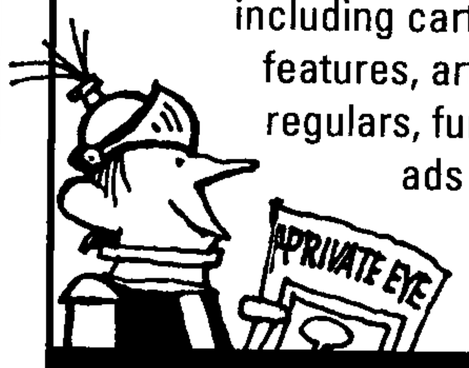

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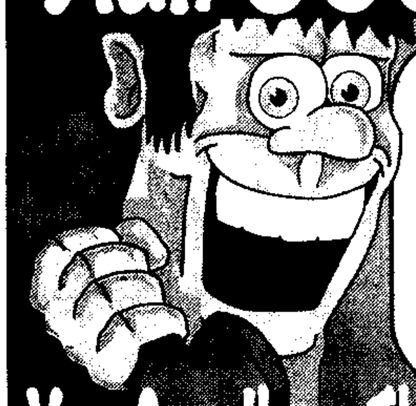

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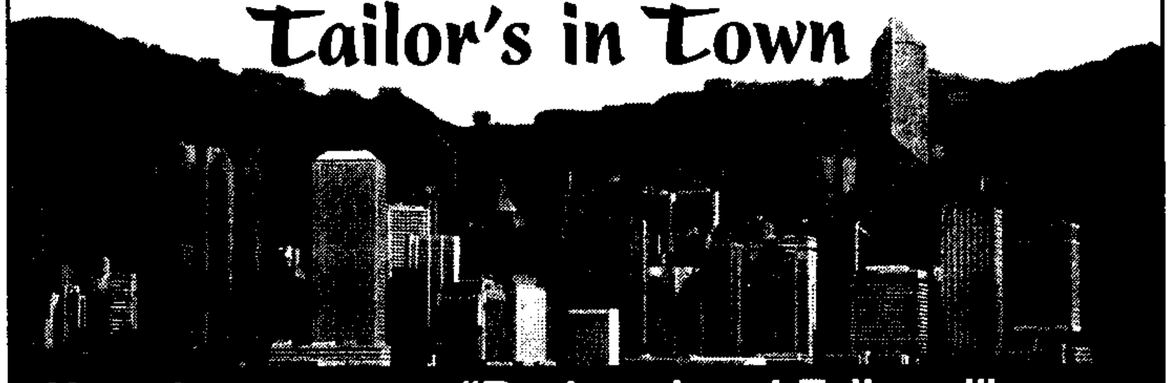

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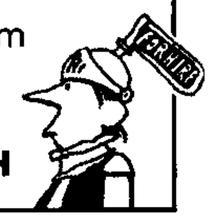

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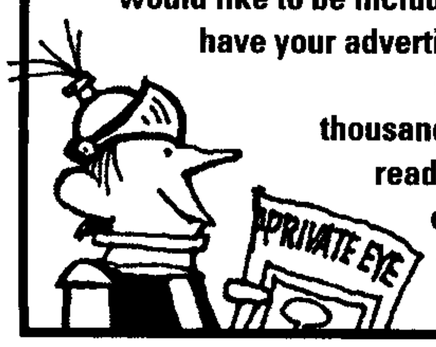

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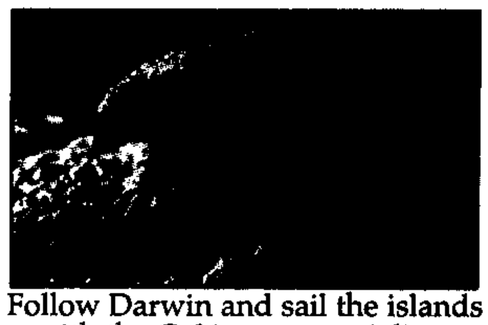
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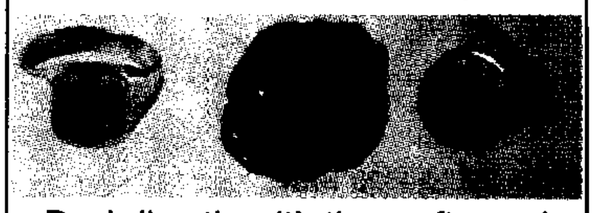
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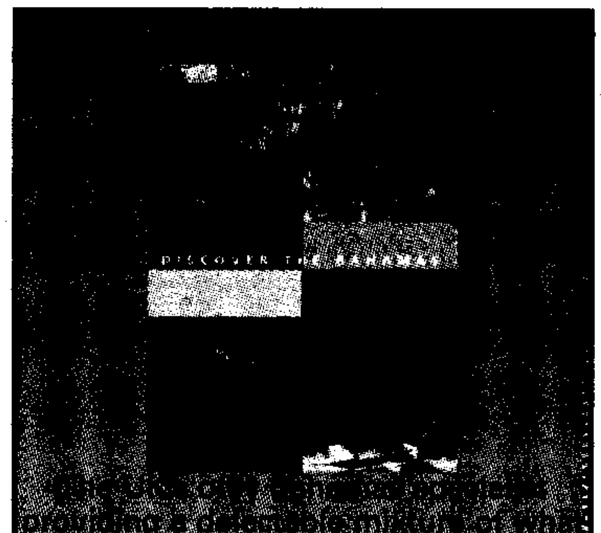

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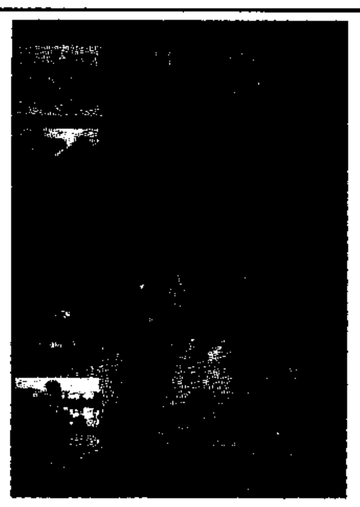
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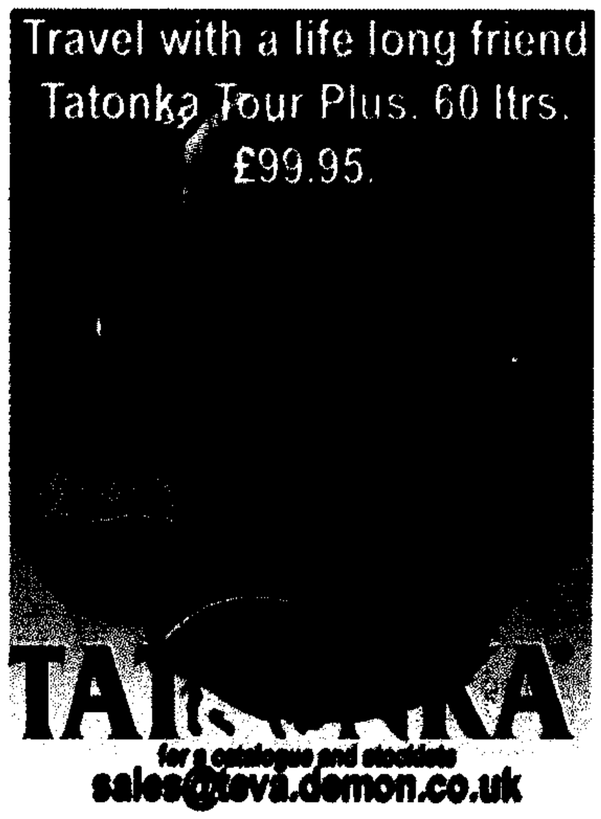

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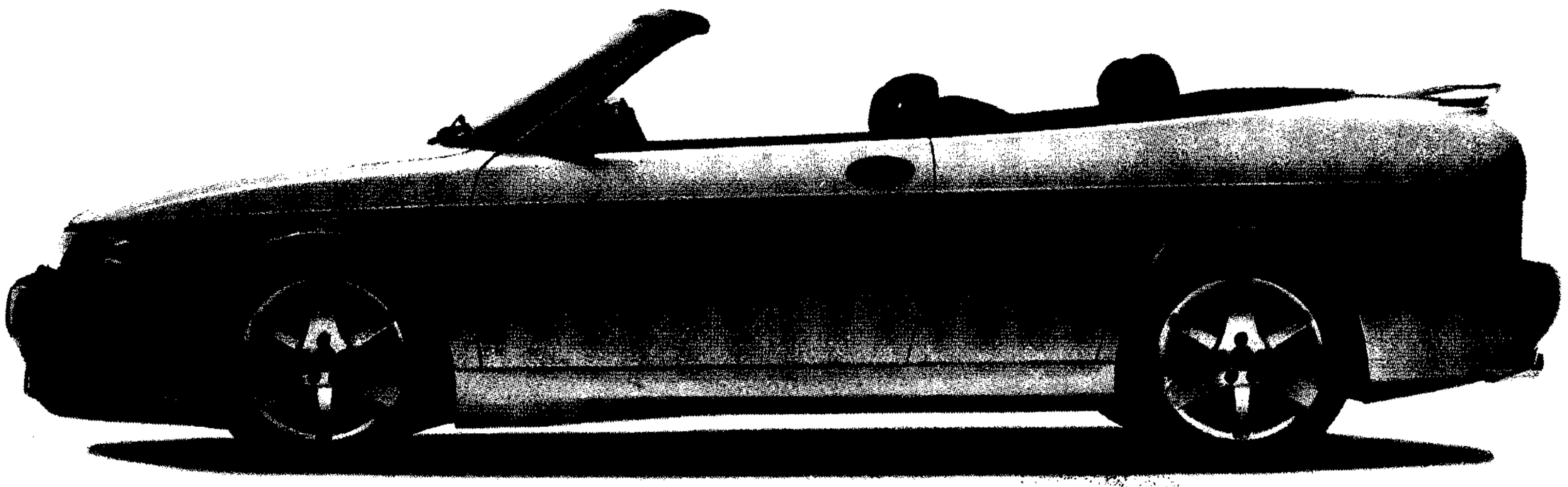

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